De Neutralibus, & Mediis.

Grosly Englished,

Iacke of both sides.

A GODLY AND A NECESSARY ADMONITION,

Touching those that be *Neuters*, holding no certaine Religion, nor Doctrine, and such as hold *with both parts, or rather of no part; very necessary* to stay, and stablish GODS Elect in the true Catholike Faith against this present wicked World.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

APOC. 3. 14. 15. 16.

These things saith the Amen, the faithfull and true witnesse, the beginning of the creation of God:

I know thy workes, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot.

So then, because thou art luke warme, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

LONDON:

Printed by G. M. for *Edward Blackmore*, and are to be sold at his shop at the great South doore of *Pauls*. 1626.

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Jacke of both Sides.

LONDON:

Printed by G. M. for Edward Blackmore, and are to
be sold at his Shop at the great South door
of Paul. 1620.

THE AVTHORS PREFACE TO THE READER.

SAint Paul *in the beginning of his most worthy graue Epistle to the* Romans, *saith thus*; I am not asha- Rom. 1.
med of the Gospell of Christ, for it is the power of God vnto saluation to all that beleeue. *In which words he hath comprehended two speciall points of a Christian man; that he should confesse the Gospell, and be of good comfort in confessing the same: For it is not enough for a man to haue the right vnderstanding of the true doctrine of the Gospell by the helpe of the holy Ghost, but it is required of necessitie, that he also vtter it faithfully and openly shew it, that God may bee glorified in the beleeuers: and that others also may shake off their errors, which they are tangled in, and be allured to receiue the truth, as Christ giueth warning, Mat. 5.* Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good workes, and glorifie your Father, which is in heauen. *And Saint* Paul *saith*; The beliefe of the Rom. 10. heart iustifieth, but the mouth confesseth vnto saluation. *And* Dauid Psa. 116. *saith*; I beleeued, and therefore I spake, *Psal. 116. For like as a tree cannot be a good tree, except it bring forth good fruit: euen so cannot the faith be a good faith, where no outward tokens of life and goodnesse appeare. Howbeit this saying ought not to be taken as though I meant that vocations should be confounded, and as though it were lawfull for euery man that lusted to start vp into the Pulpit, and there shew his minde, and teach others openly. But that it is necessarily required of euery one to confesse the Gospell in his owne vocation and place.*

Let those that be Gouernors perswade themselues, that this is one of the

principallest points of their office, which God hath placed them in, to foreſee that blindneſſe and corrupt doctrines be abandoned, and wicked Godſervice baniſhed, and that the true doctrine of the Goſpell be purely, ſoundly, and faithfully preached vnto the people by fit Miniſters. Let Houſholders inſtruct their children godly in the principles and chiefe Articles of the Goſpels doctrine. Let Teachers doe the ſame in their vocation: Let them plainly, rightly, and faithfully plant the Goſpell of Chriſt: let them
1 Pet 3. not diſſemble, let them not play the crafty Inglers, let them not cumber mens conſciences. And let euery one, when he is asked, render account of his faith in Chriſt and his Goſpell, not haltingly, but plainly, according to the third Commandement. Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vaine. Where Paul ſpeaketh of confeſſing the Goſpell, which no man ought to be aſhamed of, he giueth plaine ſignification, that his minde is to haue euery one to lay a ſure ground-worke of the heauenly doctrine, which the ſonne of God hath preached. For it is not poſsible for any man to be able to make a true and a conſtant confeſſion of the Goſpell, ſpecially when there is moſt certaine danger preſent before his eyes, except he both vnderſtand the doctrine aright, and exerciſe his conſcience therewith, and perceiue by often experience, that his conſcience (if it be toſſed and troubled with temptations) can quiet it ſelfe in none other doctrine but onely in this. Many at the beginning, when the truth of the decreed pleaſure of God, began to ſhew a glimmering light in Germany, were wondrous feruent, and ſet the better legge before ſtoutly. For it was an eaſie matter for them to crake and prate at that time: for the croſſe of perſecution, which trieth who be the true beleeuers, as Gold is tried in the fire, was thought to haue beene ſomewhat further of, than it was. But now many are become ſo lamentably light minded, and ſlide and ſhrinke ſo faſt, that it is a token, they neuer learned the principles, and foundations of the Goſpels doctrine aright. For if they had learned them, they would not be ſo ſore aſhamed of that doctrine, that they are not afraid almoſt to ſhake off the name it ſelfe, they would not ſeeke ſo narrow ſhifts, nor play the inglers to winde themſelues out of danger. Therefore ſuch men as profeſſe themſelues Chriſtians, and yet haue not the through vnderſtanding of the principall Articles of Chriſts doctrine, are nothing elſe but vaine bubbles in the water, which ſodainly ſwell, and there ſtart vp, & ſtand as though they were great matters, and yet as ſoone as a light puffe of winde hitteth vpon them, they vaniſh away againe, yea, for the moſt part they fall away of themſelues without outward force, by reaſon of their thin ſubſtance, and turne to water againe, from whence they ſtarted vp. Paul therefore requireth not an

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hypocriticall, but a true direct confessing of the Gospell, where he saith, I am not ashamed of the Gospell. *Then afterward he telleth the cause* Rom. 1. 16. *why he is not ashamed, nor any man ought to be ashamed:* For it is the power of God to saue all that beleeue. *In these words he both defineth the Gospell by the principall effect, and expresseth the most high comfort, which ought to ease the dread of dangers in confessing of the Gospell. He saith,* The Gospell is the power of God that saueth all beleeuers. *What greater thing can be spoken of this Doctrine, when a man is pressed with the dreads of conscience, that is, when he feeleth the heauy lumpe of sinnes, seeth the wrath of God, and eternall deserued paines: The Diuell requireth that is due to him by reason of sinne, death also goeth about to execute his office, and hell demandeth that is his owne. What worldly power is of so great strength in this behalfe, as is able to deliuer vs out of so great harmes, and restore vnto vs righteousnesse, life and saluation. For we are not guiltlesse, so as these enemies fall vpon vs without cause, which were some comfort of conscience, but they may by the most iust iudgement of God exercise tyranny vpon vs for euer, world without end. For we haue subdued our selues through sins vnto the gouernment of our owne voluntary free minde. And that no man is able either to saue himselfe or any other, death is a most perfect sure witnesse, which hath rid all out of the world that euer bare life; neither shall any man or woman escape his violence vnto the worlds end. But this poore person* Paul *is confidently bold to affirme in this place, that the Gospell of Christ which he preacheth, hath such a wonderfull force and power, that it is able to rid vs wretched folkes out of these euerlasting euils, to put to flight and conquer all our most cruell enemies, & to restore vnto vs the louing fauour of God, righteousnesse, and eternall life. For this way to saue by, liked almighty God after none other sort, but that he would of his mercy and for the death sake of his son, aswell receiue them that beleeue his promises declared and set forth in his vndoubted written word, as to giue them righteousnesse, life, and euerlasting saluation: As* Paul *saith,* 1 Cor. 1. After that the world in wis- 1 Cor. 1. dome knew not God through wisdome, it pleased God through the foolishnesse of preaching to saue them that beleeue. *And thereof it is rightly called the* word of life. *But as for all other doctrines how excellent* Iohn 6. *so euer they be, they are in this case vnprofitable, vain, and of no value. For* Phil. 2. *looke in what point they be the most auailable, they shew some consolations, how miseries and euill entreating, that chance to a man in this life, ought to be manfully borne and ouercome, that a stout man should not shamefully cast downe his heart altogether, and staine his honestie.*

But as for the heauy griefes of conſcience, of death and damnation, they neither rid vs of them, nor aſſwage them one iot. But this Goſpell of Ieſus Chriſt doth quiet and helpe the conſcience perfectly. For it bringeth moſt vndoubted free forgiueneſſe of ſinnes for Chriſts ſake, and driueth away the threatnings and power of the law, death, the diuell, and of hell. For when ſinne is put away, it cannot be choſen, but the violence of all enemies muſt needes not only be broken, but quite diſpatched away: and then it followeth, that we are in fauour with God, and made inheritors of euerlaſting life.

And how fortuneth it, that this Word alone is of ſo great ſtrength? For it is the power of God, *(ſaith* Paul*) that is, God according to his eternall and maruellous wiſdome hath founded and eſtabliſhed the Kingdome of his Sonne, wherein men are borne anew and ſaued by his Word, and in the ſame Word he himſelfe will be mighty and of effectuall power. As for other doctrines, they haue not this high commendation of honour, that they were the power of God. Indeed they be the noble good gifts of God, which all men ought to vſe with thankeſgiuing, but they are not that power of God, whereby the wrath of God is taken away, and whereby men are deliuered from the Lordſhip of death, the deuill, and hell. This reall title, the Goſpell of Chriſt, which was declared out of the eternall Fathers boſome, chalengeth onely to it ſelfe. Therefore where Chriſt ſaith,* He that heareth you, heareth me. *And,* It is not you that ſpeake, but the Spirit of God which is in you: *teacheth vs concerning this power, that God doth giue righteouſneſſe and euerlaſting life to all beleeuers through the Word. Furthermore, the ſelfe ſame Word that teacheth the benefits of Chriſt, is rightly called alſo* The power of God, *becauſe it abideth and endureth for euer: neither can it by any force or craft, either of the world or the deuill (which ſeeke alwaies to doe miſchiefe) be* Eſa. 40. Mat. 16. *ouerthrowne or brought to confuſion, as Chriſt ſaith,* There ſhall no gates of hell preuaile againſt it. *For albeit, this Word that was ſent from Heauen hath beene ſometimes moſt filthily mangled and darkned, ſo that horrible errors haue borne the rule farre and broad, and the ſtate of all things hath beene after ſuch wiſe as though it ſhould be quite plucked vp by the roots, yet in other places, though among a very ſlender company, it hath laine vndefiled, and when time came, it was brought forth into light againe by ſuch inſtruments as God raiſed vp into the miniſtry: whom he cauſed to gather his Church together, that truly acknowledged him, truly called vpon him, and truly ſerued him. Therefore the Goſpell of Chriſt, which* Paul, *and other of the Apoſtles and*

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Prophets preached, is such a one, that no man may iustly bee ashamed of it. For it is the very power of God, because it both worketh saluation in the hearts of faithfull beleeuers, and cannot bee vtterly extinguished. Wherfore shal we then be afraid at the power & furiousrage of the whole world, which now (as though it were wood) goeth about either to obscure or vtterly put forth the heauenly light of Gods Gospell? The world hath some power, I say not nay, many are mischieuously well skilled in crafty policy, wherewith their drift is to vndermine the truth of God, if they could by any possible craft ouerthrow it, I grant: but they shall be none other in effect, than if water bubbles should beat against rocks of Adamant. For in as much as God hath strengthened this Word with his power, they shall displease God to their owne greatest harme, whosoeuer attempteth any thing against it: as the Histories of all ages doe plenteously report. Then seeing our saluation is contained in this onely word, it is our duty constantly to perseuere in it, that we suffer not our selues to be whirled about with euery blustring winde of Doctrine. It were our duty also not to be so sore afraid, though our enemies, the Papists, sought our destruction: but to confesse the Gospell constantly, and let God alone with the successe of the matter, for he will not suffer his owne cause to faile, nor his power to be weakned or diminished.

To the intent therefore I might monish, and according to Pauls *saying, exhort some both to embrace the true doctrine of the Gospell, which is come to open light now in these latter dayes of the world, and to confesse it, and to keepe it safe also. I haue vpon a godly purpose gathered certaine reasons, that it is not lawfull for a man either to be a plaine* Neuter, *that is, to be without any certaine Religion, and passe vpon no doctrine: or to halt on both sides at once, that is, to be desirous to be ioyned in familiar friendship both with the defenders of corrupt doctrine, and them that maintaine pure doctrine all at once, vnder what pretence soeuer it be. Howbeit my minde was not to offend any mans person, but onely purposed to reason vpon the matter it selfe, as modestly as I could, out of the foundations of holy Scripture so farre as God gaue me leaue: and I trust I shall in a manner satisfie them, that iudge me with indifferent hearts. But against the snatching of Peirce pickquarrell, I shall peraduenture haue no remedy: For I doubt not, but some will construe me crookedly inough, as the verse saith:* Conscius ipse sibi, de se putat omnia dici. *He that hath a guilty conscience thinketh euery thing spoken by himselfe. But I desire all men to weigh the importance of the matter without priuate affections; and consider beforehand, in what state they will appeare another day before the Iudge Christ,*

which

which shall require a reckoning of vs all at his last iudgement. I meddle not now with politicall orders of the world, but of the conscience, in what kind of Doctrine it can quiet it selfe, and of saluation of soule. And albeit I doe well enough vnderstand mine owne infancy and childish tongue in comparison of so many most excellent, most learned, and most graue wise men, whom God hath stirred vp in many places in this most happy time, which exceed mee farre both in learning and practise of things, and could haue handled this matter much more notably than I can doe, yet for as much as God of his great mercy hath called mee to this ministery in the Church, I thought it my duty also, to beare and present mine offering vnto the Lords Altar, not doubting, but he will take it in good part, although it is not comparable vnto other mens gifts. Christ maketh signification, that he was not discontent with the two farthings, which the poore Widdow cast into the treasure house, and therefore he will not be displeased at my one farthing, which I now exhibite. This I thought good to dedicate vnto thee, gentle Reader. For that there is nothing in all the world that beautifieth and becommeth a man so much, as liberall bringing vp in good letters, especially if he set his minde vpon godlinesse withall, which ought to be the gouernour and limiter of all other sciences. Let other make much of their riches and worldly power, which are slippery goods, and fall away in a moment. But a minde well husbanded and furnished with learning, and specially godlinesse, are euerlasting riches. The wicked and most vngracious people of all, haue worldly riches, as well as the good and godly: but they haue not honest learning and godlinesse so well as they. Thus I beseech God the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, to keepe vs all in the one and true Doctrine of the Gospell, and preserue the same vnto our posterity, and suffer it not to be vtterly destroyed by the Deuils workmanship. Fare you heartily well.

I. W.

A GODLIE AND A NECESSARIE ADMONITION concerning *Neuters* and such *as deserue the grosse name of* IACKE *of both sides.*

MEN in all Ages haue iudged that the diuersities of Religions and Doctrines doe cause alterations of mens mindes, and sundry changes, and bring discommodities vnto Realmes. And for that cause there haue beene alwaies many drye mockers of Religion, and specially of that Religion which God himselfe hath set forth and ordeyned. And of the learned sort there haue beene not a few, that would apply themselues vnto the wills of the high Estates, (like gay fine Cookes for their Lords owne tooth) and seeke some sleighty quiet meanes, by patching two or three Religions of contrary sorts together, as well to take away the troubles of Scismes, as to maintaine peace, and the state of things present the better and (as they thought) the more in safegard. This was the originall fountaine (doubtles) whence the Turkes Alcoran sprung, & whence many other eluish changes and horrible mingle mangles of Religions had their beginning, which, it is not possible peraduenture to plucke vp cleane by the rootes while the world goeth about. It is no maruaile therefore, though those most noysome mischiefes come vp thick and threefold now in this last doting age

of the lying world(for they began a great while agoe) and grow,and beare the ſwing more and more,ſeeing Chriſt told before hand, that the laſt ſeaſon of the world ſhould bee the filthy ſinke of all wickedneſſe, in ſo much that it ſhall be almoſt a doubt, whether the Sonne of God when hee commeth downe from his ſecret Seate vnto iudgement, ſhall finde faith on earth. And we are all ouerwhelmed almoſt with ſo great darkeneſſe, and are ſo pur-blinde that wee cannot ſee theſe ſo haynous miſchiefes, nor much abhor them; no, we rather ioyne our ſelues to them in a manner of our owne voluntary minde.There is no ſmall paine therefore hanging ouer this laſt ſeaſon, ſeeing all countreys are giuen to godleſſe voluptuouſneſſe ſo far and wide, yea to ſuch godleſſe voluptuouſneſſe, that the moſt cleare light of Gods Goſpell, which through the great mercy of God hath ſhined bright in theſe latter dayes,and doth by the bounteous benefit of God caſt light yet ſtill,is lothed, and is not only troden vnder foot of many men,but alſo which is the more vnworthy and more noyſome, men count it a light tryfling matter; nay they recken it a ſingular witty part, that they can craftily cloke and diſſemble Religion, and handle themſelues in all outward affaires after ſuch ſort, as if a man were familiarly linked to both parts, not altogether gon from the Papiſts, leſt hee bee reckoned a ſtubborne fellow, not vtterly deuorced from the Goſpellers, leſt hee be called an Apoſtata: and by that ſhift to walke as it were in the middle and moſt ſafe way, to be indifferent to both ſides,to keepe peace,ſubſtance,honour, and dignity ſafe, and not altogether nor ſluttiſhly to forſake Religion,and yet for all that, to ſeeme addict to what Religion a man will. This matter I ſay is no ſmall miſchiefe which the deuill in this filthy ſinke-hole of the world bewitcheth and inſpireth folkes withall. For by this meanes mens hearts by little and little waxe faint more and more, the truth is kept in couert and ſuffereth violence,confeſſing of the Goſpel is become mummebudget, Martyrs wax geaſon, and Chriſt is altogether buryed. And this miſchiefe is pleaſant and gay at a bluſh, but it is a perilouſer matter than men take for, nourcing the litter of all abhomination, as it were vnder a great ſwolne-tunbelied-panch, and is indeed a boxe concerning all miſchiefe. Now, ſeeing the matter is euen ſo, and this miſchiefe creepeth on (like a canker)and ſpreadeth it ſelfe daily broader and broader,& infecteth very many folkes of all eſtates, with his moſt Peſtilent contagious infection: ſurely it were very neceſſarily requiſite,that thoſe whom God hath ordained to bee watchmen on his tower, ſhould not bee careleſſe as though there were no danger in hand: they ſhould not play the dumme dogges,or talke of nothing but as though all were well: but foraſmuch as moſt preſent

sent perill of soules is before our eyes, they should bee diligent, and like faithfull trusty men they should priuately and openly resist these so great mischiefes: they should monish and exhorte all men to confesse the truth plainely without halting, & let God alone with the rest. For it is his charge to care how he will keepe his Church and members, and traine them safely through the wilde raging waues of the red sea, when the rusling Empires of the world shall come to naught. For euery one is bounden and constrained by the Commandement of God to linke himselfe surely to the truth, and confesse it, yea if neede were, euen with the danger of his life. And albeit I measure my selfe by mine owne foot and perceiue how vnfit a man I am to treate of this controuersie at large, namely being so farre spread abroad, yet vpon certaine considerations I am purposed presently to talke of some poynts, at least touching this matter, to the intent I may shew in few words as it were poynting with my finger, that it is not lawfull nor a small tryfling matter for a man to be an Epicure, or to dally in religion, and writh the truth of the Gospell to his owne priuate commodities, as hee listeth himselfe. And I trust that God will take this childish stammering tongue of mine in thankfull parte, seeing it lyspeth of his glory and praise. And although it bee not allowed of all men in this most corrupt world, it shall make no great force. *Paul* saith: *if I went about to please men, I could not be the seruant of Christ.* Gal. 1. Now will I briefly speake of two questions: first, whether it be lawfull for any man to be a *Neuter*, and then whether a man may lawfully keepe a meane, or be a *Iacke of both sides*. And when I haue knyt vp these in few words, and ministred but euen as it were couert matter for men to muse vpon, I shall then leaue the whole case for euery man to way and discusse more aduisedly and more throughly with himself. And before we buckle vs to our businesse, it is good to know, that I reason not presently of any open blasphemous sorts of folkes, as of Turkes or Iewes or other such like idolatrous people, but of them most chiefly which are among the people of God, that is to say, in the Church: and are not altogether godlesse, as they thinke themselues, and as they would haue other to iudge of them: neither are they of the base common sort of people, nor vnlearned silly soules, but passe other men in many gifts of nurture and good qualities, and are such men as would not bee reproued nor found fault withall, but looke earnestly to bee praised for their singular wit and soberness.

Those therfore be Neuters, which when men vary in their doctrine, that is, when two doctrins are so contrary the one to the other, that there is hard hold among great learned men about them, assent openly to none of them *Who bee Neuters.*

all but abide in a meane, either defying both parts and deuiſing ſome peculiar opinions of their owne braines, which they loue and ſet much by: or elſe gaping for a determination of Doctrines in ſome general Councel, where thoſe that beare the ſway in the Church and all the whole world, ſhould acknowledge and embrace the truth, and where it ſhould bee ſet forth vnto all men after ſuch ſort, as none durſt bee ſo hardy as to ſpeake once againſt it. But in the meane ſeaſon while it commeth not thus to paſs, they keepe them in a meane, they doubt in their minde, they reſtraine and ſuſpend their conſent, they neither allow, nor diſallow either part. But thoſe are *Iackes of both ſides*, or walkers in a meane, which vſe themſelues after a contrary faſhion, that is, they hang on both ſides, and do what they can to be in fauour with both partes: ſome popiſh toyes they follow to come in fauour with them, for feare of putting themſelues & their pelfe in hazard. On the other ſide, their drift is to content the Goſpellers alſo, leſt it ſhould bee thought they doe againſt the truth that they had acknowledged: And all this vpon a wondrous forecaſt of peace and tranquillity. Such men as are not earneſtly bent to any Religion, and referre all to bee ſet forth, allowed, and debated by a Councel, or leane both to this ſide and to that ſide, are worthy to beare the name of *Neuters* and *Iackes of both ſides*. This (I truſt) ſhall plainely appeare by that, that followeth. Therefore I will make no more words in this behalfe. Of theſe indifferent diſcreet wiſe-men there are diuerſe kindes. Firſt, in a generality there be two ſorts. For ſome are *Neuters* and *Iackes of both ſides* in temporall and politicall & worldly matters, which be ſubiect vnto reaſon, ſo as they may bee rightly diſcerned and iudged by reaſon. For God hath graffed a certaine wonderfull light into the nature of man, which this preſent life may in a manner be gouerned by. Howbeit, it is greatly abated and obſcured through originall ſinne, ſo that very many times that excellent iudgement of reaſon is deceiued, and readeth in many things at a venture, as the blinde man caſteth his ſtaffe. There bee other *Neuters* and *Iackes of both ſides* in diuine things and Gods owne holy matters, which perraine to the conſcience and ſoules health. Thoſe be not naturally ſubiect vnto reaſon, but they are and ought to be taken for true: why? becauſe God hath plainely opened them. Theſe I now properly ſpeake of. And of theſe there are many ſorts. Some regard no kinde of Doctrine at all, and ſo they tell euery body: they defie both the Papiſts part and the Goſpellers, and liue after their owne faſhion and fantaſie, either vtterly without Religion, not paſſing whether they know the truth or not, or elſe they imagine opinions of their owne, and thoſe they ſticke ſtoutely to, yea, when they haue not a word to

ſay,

say, yet they will not yeeld nor change their iudgement, but as it were vnmoueable meere stones sticke fast in their place. Those may truely and properly be called Epicures and Godlesse persons, men both wayward and stubborne. Some are secretly and craftily halters on both sides, that they may be as it were all one with the Gospellers in outward countenance, but yet they beare the hartier good will inwardly to the Papists the enemies of the Gospell. In their hearts they allow Papistry, and now and then they belch out no lesse by parables in their Communication. As for the opinions that they haue once conceiued, and specially such as they haue beene nosled vp in from their tender yeares, they keepe still tooth and nayle, and hide them to to diligently within themselues. They wish in their sleeue that all Popery were set vp againe, yet for feare and worldly aduantage sake, they beare a faire face outwardly, and dare not speake openly what their heart thinketh. These may be called, and are indeed Pestilent hypocrites, because they blow neither hot nor cold. Other *Iackes of both sides* there are much like vnto these we spake of last, but yet more crafty and more vngratious than all the rest. For they play whip *Iacke* and turne them wonderfully, and halt on both sides so nimbly, that they doe what they can to please & content both partes. They behaue themselues so when they are with the Papists, that they seeme to be of their minde. Contrariwise among the Gospellers they make a goodly shew, because they would seeme not to haue vtterly cast away nor forsaken the truth. In some things they frame themselues like vnto the Papists the enemies of the Gospel, they beare with many things, they receiue many things, and they dissemble many things, that they thinke verily they are of their opinion. Contrariwise their talke is such vnto the other parte, that no man can possibly perceiue any manifest shrinking in them. They seeke narrow wales, that some manner agreement may be had, at the least in outward matters. They trauaile till they sweat againe, to maintaine tranquillity, not onely in temporall affaires, but in ecclesiasticall matters most principally, as they make their boast, and may not abid them that dare once hisse against their policies. What name I shall decke these men with all, I cannot almost tell. For they differ among themselues one from another wonderfully. But let them be called Martyn many colours. Watkin Wauerous, and Barnard Belymountes, that can turne their cloke as the winde bloweth, and make a concord betweene Christ and Belial. Well, we may call them after their Godfather on the steeple top, Weather cockes.

These people will bee counted to exceede, and to bee farre wiser than other folkes. Indeede they be farre wickeder, for their fetch is all for their

owne safety, and yet vnder a faire cloked pretence to bewitch and bleare the vnlearned silly soules eyes with all, and to draw innumerable other into the pit with them.

But for shortnesse sake let vs (as wee began) call the first sort *Neuters*, and all the rest *Iackes of both sides*. And if any more come in the way, include them within these generall sortes. Howbeit there ought to bee a diligent difference put betweene weaklings, which be desirous to learne and to be taught, and our *Neuters* and *Iackes of both sides*. For my communication heere is of such as offend, more of malice then of weakenes and ignorance. As for the weake and such as do what they can to come to the truth, and if they might fortune to heare it, would most desirously and with thankesgiuing receiue it, we, as reason is, beare patiently with all, and beseech God to behold and helpe their groanings, that they may receiue some glimmering out of the bright Sun of the Gospel.

But as for my *Neuters* and *Iackes of both sides*, they are almost past amendment, as it shall be opened afterward.

Now let vs shew at few words, out of what fountaine these men, which follow their owne fansies, spring so fast, and what maketh them to become such manner of folkes. For they come all out of one fenne. But to speake at a word, they are bred either of careles security and contempt of Gods Word: (For some folkes are so light and so inconstant minded, that they speake not in earnest of any thing: and thinke it a very small matter to dally in Religion a little, and to abuse it at their pleasure as they thinke meete) or else of Philosophy and naturall reason, which goeth euer about to make an hotch-potch of Gods Word & reason together, & after the rule of reason to search and to measure all things, and to iudge what is to bee liked and what is not. As it seemeth condemnable to mans reason that God accepteth men for the righteousnesse of their owne vertuous deedes sake, though not altogether, yet in some part at the least. For God is a most righteous Spirit, which requireth righteous deeds as meete it is, and giueth reward for them, and abhorreth and punisheth those workes that are vnrighteous. That is a pleasant and a gay concord therefore, which coupleth mans works and Christs workes together: that man is accepted first freely for Christs sake, but not freely afterward in the end, but for his owne charities sake, so that he maketh his iustification perfectly vp himselfe. But when these same men heare manifest testimonies brought out both of the Olde Testament and New, which teach that we are pronounced righteous, or righteousnesse is imputed vnto vs onely through the merit of Christ by onely faith freely without the worthinesse of our merits: that geare draweth

their

their mindes this way and that way, that they hang in a doubt, and cannot tell, which way they ought rather to leane to. Reaſon calleth this way: the authority of Gods Word biddeth that way. Theſe diſcreet witty men alſo thinke thus. Lo, of the one part thoſe that haue rule of the Church and worldly gouernment, confirme and ſtrengthen their Doctrines with ſome teſtimonies of Scripture, with the authority of Fathers, with the conſent of certaine Councells, and with the opinion of long continuance: and theſe are learned and holy men, and it is not like that they are cleane deſtitute of the holy Ghoſt.

But on the other part they doe the ſame, and much more ſtrongly: they pick out the foundation of all the holy Scriptures, and lay them out openly before men, they report them to the pureſt ſentences of fathers, and to the authority of the pureſt Councells, and ſhew the conſent of the Church in all Ages continually from the beginning. Neuertheleſſe they are but a few men in number, and of no famous eſtimation. To be ſhort, both parties ſeem to haue ſome truth on their ſides.

They thinke therefore: what ſhift ſhall I make in this behalfe? It is much better for me to be a *Neuter* in ſo great a controuerſie, than to take vp the ſtrife to mine owne harme.

So men that loue honeſty (as they would be taken) are offended with the vices of both partes. They thinke, lo on the Papiſts part there are many fowle faults and vices, idolatry, inuocation of dead Saints, defiling of the Sacraments, Simony, wiue-leſſe whoremonging, &c. On the contrary part among the Goſpellers there be many imbecillities, there is no diſcipline, there reigne deceites, drunkenneſſe and riot. So both partes haue very many things worthy reproach. And when they haue conceiued ſuch a fantaſticall imagined toy in their heads, as *Plato* had or rather as the Anabapiſts haue, what manner a thing the Congregation ought to be, that is without ſpot or ſoyle, therefore they thinke it a wittier part for them to abſtaine from both ſides, till thoſe offences be taken away. They ſee the power and ſucceſſe of the one part, and iudge their luckie ſtate to be a teſtimony that God loueth them: Againe, they behold the misfortunes and miſeries of the other part, which they take for tokens that God is diſpleaſed with them. At a word, they compare the quiemeſſe of the Papiſts and the troubles that the other part ſuffereth together. In all theſe matters reaſon toyleth idlily, and caſteth very may folkes hearts headlong into the full ſtreame or gulfe of all doubtes.

Thirdly, they be Neuters and Iackes of both ſides, that ſhun the feare of dangers and the Croſſe of perſecution, which for the moſt part keepeth company

company with the confessing of the truth, as the shadow doth with the body. And all this commeth to passe, by reason they are ignorant of the Word of God. For those that wauer and doubt after this fashion, were neuer true Christians: they neuer laid the foundations of sound Doctrine aright, and they are the seede that was throwen vpon the high way, and vpon thornes, and stones, which can bring forth no fruit. They set more by the things that are corporall then euerlasting. They are and remaine still the children of this world, farre wiser then the children of light, in their generation. But I will talke no longer of these matters, for they shall bee touched afterward againe in their owne place. Hereof (except my wit faile me) it may be gathered in a manner, whereof these double faced doubters spring. And albeit some make one pretence, some another, yet they may be referred to this one sum, as I take it. Now therefore the question is not altogether to be mocked at, whether it be free for a man to be a *Neuter*, that is, to abstaine vtterly from both partes, the one being contrary to the other, and follow his owne wit, in the meane time, till the truth be opened, and be allowed of all men from the highest to the lowest. The answer is simple, plaine, and true, that there is a great difference betweene temporall matters of the world, and sacred matters of the soule: In temporall affaires a man may blamelesly, nay, rightfully sometime keepe a meane, and suspend his iudgement, that is to say, in such causes as bee intricate and darke, and passe the capacity of mans reason. For there be very many naturall things, which the weakenes of mans wit is not able to try and search out. And so in actuall things, there be not a few that passe mans vnderstanding, and are not opened plaine enough yet to this hower. As when they dispute in naturall things, how the most goodly many couloured Raine-bowe is engendred in the cloude, of what matter the Winde is made indeede, from whence it taketh his beginning, and where it giueth ouer, or other such like, it is not throughly tryed nor knowne. For a man may perceiue in that matter, that reason is very weake, seeing it is not able with her quickneese to describe so much as these lower matters. The Philosophers cannot tell, from whence this darke ignorance is mingled among the most excellent light which was created in man. But the Word of God telleth that it commeth of sinne. Adam while he was in his entire perfection, discerned most readily the natures of all things that bare life, and of all hearbs, and therefore he gaue euery thing a name agreeable to the nature of it, as Scripture doth report. Whereby it is plaine that he had a great and a notable knowledge in all other natures also. But after his fall, that gift began to vanish away more and more, namely in his posterity, and that that

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remaineth in vs is very slender, but yet in mans life it is both great and necessary. It also beareth witnesse of God, and sheweth that the shadowes (or the decayes rather) of Gods workmanship doe still remaine, which the Sonne of God must needs restore, and that shall be done perfectly in the resurrection. But to returne to the matter. It is not lawfull for all this, for a man in all worldly matters to restraine his assent, to doubt, and to agree vnto no iudgement. For some are knowne by their principles, which are either deduced out of their principles by good consequence, or else they are knowne and discerned perfectly enough by experience. In such cases verely, an honest man may not lawfully doubt: as that twice two is foure, a man may not lawfully make a doubt of it, because that manner of knowledge is grauen into mans nature. That a man should doe one good turne for another, and that none ought to hurt another, all men know by nature most certainly. Wherefore, if any man will yet still stand in doubt, he is iustly counted not to be a man, but the monster of a man, and without all wit.

So if the question be asked, whether voluptuousnesse or vertue be the end that man is made to, it is not lawfull to be a Neuter. For the very reasons that are deduced of nature it selfe, doe euidently declare, that not voluptuousnesse but rather vertue (that is to say, the acknowledging of God) is the end whereunto man is ordained. For the law of nature is so graffed in euery one of vs, that it representeth and sheweth (as much as remaineth still in our corrupt nature) the chiefe workeman, as it were in a glasse. Therefore they that say, pleasure is the end whereunto man is made, are led by a brutish affection, rather then by naturall iudgement. But as for those that leaue the matter indifferent, and follow neither part, as though it were a matter about mans vnderstanding, they are doubtlesse misled by the power of Sathan. And yet there were among them that liued as nature led them without the light of Gods word, which maintained, that a man must doubt euen in these matters that I now speake of: affirming that the truth of things is incomprehensible, and cannot possibly be attained vnto: as some held that followed *Plato*, *Hirillus*, especially *Pirrho*, a man who was vnreasonably mad, who taught that nothing can be certainly knowne, that all things must be doubted of, or (as I may so tearme it) that Neutralty is to be allowed: As, that I am now in this place, that twice foure are eight, that a man seeth with his eyes, that he heareth with his eares, and such like, he held all to vncertaine. But it is a manifest and more than a diuelish madnesse, to put no difference at all, betweene those things that God hath graffed into nature, and would haue

to be rules for men to follow in their life time: and those things which the wit of man is able either with much difficulty, or else not at all to attaine. These monsters with their followers are iustly reiected, and exploded. For what is it else to deny things manifest and euident by Nature, but to fight with Nature, nay, rather with God himselfe? Those things also which are confirmed by handsome and not altogether absurd reasons, a man may not lawfully infringe or weaken without good aduisement. For it is the property of a good and a sober wit not to loue cauillations, and in matters of more doubt to embrace and follow the sentence that is more to the purpose, and the more like to be true.

Obserue therefore the difference betweene hidden and perplexe matters, and those that are plaine and expresly set forth before all mens eyes and vnderstanding, or be strengthened at least with tolerable reasons. In matters that be obscure and intricate a man may stay his consent till the truth be knowne: But when it is once brought forth and openly shewed, none that is in his right wit ought to say against it.

After like fashion in pleas of law, in seditions and tumults, when the cause is doubtfull and disputable, a good man may without hurt of conscience be a Neuter. For it may be, that in politicall causes both parts may sometimes erre from the truth, being deceiued with the likelihood of the truth. Therefore it is a more sure way for a man to remaine a Neuter and in doubt still, vntill the truth be euidently shewed. Nevertheless, *Solon* which was the noblest wise man of all his time, made a Law, that it should be lawfull for no man to be a Neuter in publike matters of variance, because (as *Gellius* expoundeth it) that way was thought to be of very much importance to establish concord. Besides that, a Neuter might be reckoned and accused as a traitour of both parts. But of this argument I will say no more here. Onely let it suffice, that I haue briefly shewed, that some things in worldly and ciuill cases bee vncertaine and doubtfull, wherein a good man may be a Neuter, till the error be taken away: and that some things are so certaine and so manifestly plaine, that no man may stand in doubt of them, except he will cauill with his owne conscience, and abandon all certainty.

Solon.

But in sacred matters, pertaining to Gods glory, and our soules health, the case is farre otherwise. For a reason not bete of the rules of iudgement, that are bred in vs naturally, and which we know without a teacher, as are the principles of speculation and practise, which I spake of before, as all a whole thing is greater than any part of it, that Parents ought to be honoured, and such like; or those that are knowne by experience,

or

or any meanes else; but of the secret mysteries of God, which (as the Apostle saith) no eye hath seene, no eare hath heard, nor haue entred into any mans heart, which, therefore be certaine, sure, and perpetuall, because God hath opened them, not in figures but plainly, and would haue euery body both to know them and beleeue them. But to make the matter more plaine and cleare, I shall diuide it as it were into two sorts.

First, there be some things in Scriptures ouer-darke, which are not all throughly opened, but are deferred vnto the life to come: and diuerse men haue diuerse opinions of them. Then there be other things that are manifestly disclosed and declared, which God would haue to be knowne in this life. This distinction, I confesse, is somewhat too wide, if any man lusteth to diuide it more exactly, I hinder him not. Touching ceremonies instituted in the Church by the authority of man, for as much as they swarue somewhat from this matter, my purpose is not to speake any farther of them in this place. Of that first sort, such be, as are no Articles of the faith, nor be so necessary, but that wee may be saued though we know them not. But forasmuch as mans nature is curious, and goeth about to search out secrets, and namely those that are hidden by the singular counsell of God, that is the cause why men doe varie in opinions, so that one thus, and another after another sort hath iudged of them. In this varietie of opinions, and in such matters as either are not throughly opened, or the exact knowledge of them is not required vnto saluation, we may restraine our assent and subscribe to neither part, as in a matter too deepe for our capacitie perfectly to inquire of. As for example. In the Scriptures it is told before hand that this world shall once be destroyed, and the quick and the dead iudged: thus farre it is an Article of our faith. But the time when, what yeare, what day, and what moment that shall be, is no where expressed clerely and distinctly in the Roles of holy writ. And Christ when his Apostles asked him, made them this answere: *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the father hath set in his owne power, Act.* 1. And concerning that day and houre no man knoweth nor the Angels of heauen, but onely the father. Also, *those dayes shall bee shortned for the elects sake, Mat.* 24. And *Paul* saith, *The day of the Lord shall come as a thiefe in the night,* 1 *Thes.* 5. Therefore as concerning the prefixed and very exact time, when the whole building of this world shall be dissolued, and all the dead shall at the sounding of the trumpet and the voyce of the Archangell come out of their graues, it is not an Article of our faith, but a riddle, that we perchance shall neuer be able to read. But men now a dayes (as their Nature is passing curious,

The certain day of doome.

and harpeth vpon things forbidden) gheſſe at a venture. They bring out *Elias* ſaying, of the 6000. yeeres, wherewith the workes of the ſix dayes accord. There be ſome Prophecies in *Daniel*, in the ſayings of Chriſt and the Apoſtles, and in the *Apocalyps*: and ſome ſignes alſo are ſpoken of to come before, which now are come to paſſe before our eyes. Of theſe and certaine other texts compared together, the time is prefixed when the world ſhall haue an end. And there haue beene ſome double diligent and buſie-witted men, that letted not to appoint the very yeere and day in open writings, but when it happened not iuſtly after their reckoning, it made ſome of them aſhamed, and reproued them of notable vnaduiſed temerity. And albeit no man (as I ſuppoſe) will call it ſinne to try and ſift out ſome matters that are ſomewhat ſecret and hidden in the darker Prophecies of the holy Scripture, yet it is as free for a man, not to aſſent forthwith to things that be vncertaine.

Therefore ſeeing as well the coniectures be vncertaine, what coniectures ſoeuer they be, as alſo Chriſt hath told before, that it is a matter not poſſible to be ſifted out, no not ſo much as of the Angels in heauen, which paſſe vs not a little in wiſedome and knowledge of ſecret things; a godly man may without hurt of conſcience in this behalfe doubt, and confeſſe freely, that he will leaue the matter in the mid-way, becauſe it is too high for mans reaſon poſſibly to perceiue, except God reueale it vnto him. There be other matters alſo ſuch as this is. But let vs
The Starre. come now to other opinions. There are ſundry opinions, what the Starre was that ſhone to the Wiſe men in their iourney to Chriſt: whether it were an Angell, or a certaine ſtarre ſo faſhioned and gouerned of God, that it had a wonderfull courſe, applying it ſelfe meet for the Wiſe mens paſſage. Doubtleſſe the opinion of both parts ſeemeth to be alike true. For the moouing of it doth almoſt proue, that there was ſome reaſonable thing in that flaming brightneſſe: For it made no further haſte then ſerued for the wiſe mens turne, and ſhewed the right way (as cumbrous as it was to hit) through euery by-way, now and then it hid it ſelfe, and at laſt it ſtood right ouer the houſe, where Chriſt was newly borne: inſomuch that it hanged downward and pointed the very place where the Babe lay. Therefore the reaſonable courſe and place ſeeme not poſſible to agree fitly inough with a Naturall Starre, but rather vnto an Angell; for Angels are in other caſes many times ſeene in fierie flames. Contrariwiſe, the power of God maketh all things poſſible, that it might haue beene thought a very ſtarre indeede. For who will ſay, it is not poſſible for God to create a new ſtarre, in the honour of his moſt deere beloued

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sonne, and of that wonderfull worke, and to appoint it another place then the rest had, yea to make it to moue also after so maruailous a fashion, that when the Wise men were set forward, it guided them the way still vnto *Bethlehem*, and there when it had done as it was appointed, it vanished away againe. God with one onely word set all the whole court of heauen in order, and prescribed to the starres both mouable and fixed their courses, which they hold on still vnto their appointed limits, where they shall also change. So indeede God might by his owne almightie will, most easily bring to passe, that a very starre should shine bright in the ayre, and keepe this so wonderfull a race still vnto Christs manger. Notwithstanding, forasmuch as it is no Article of the faith, but a hidden matter and an opinion, and maketh small skill, whether of these opinons a man leaneth vnto, the soule catcheth no perill nor harme by it. Wherefore it is free for a man in this variety of opinions, to keepe backe his assent, and be a Neuter. It hath beene long in question, and hard hold hath beene among Diuines, concerning the soule of man, whether it be engrendred of his owne Naturall of-spring, or be engraffed into the lumpe of mans substance from heauen, seeing it beginneth to haue life in the mothers wombe? There is tough reasoning on both parts.

Of the Soule of Man.

Such as thinke it is not deriued from the parents, but instilled or rather engraffed from without of God, alledge this saying; *GOD breathed into his face the breath of life*. After the same sort they thinke euen now that man is created of God, so as their soules are brought downe out of heauen, and poured into the bodies. There are other coniectures also, as that soules be certaine heauenly substances, and come not of the elements, and that they are perpetuall, and not mortal, nor subiect vnto corruption, as other members of a mans body are. Neither doe they thinke it consonant, that one soule is engendred of another soule, as one body is of another, seeing spirituall things can not be changed after such manner of sorts.

On the other side, the opinion seemeth both godly and like to be true, to affirme, that soules are engendred indeed of Naturall of-spring, that is to say, that they are deriued from the soules of men by the wonderfull and almighty power of God, as the whole compound of man is. And this is confirmed by no light reasons, nor without certaine testimonies of the Scripture, which seeme to grant the same. Originall sinne is graffed naturally into all men and women so sore, that the body is not onely defiled with it euen of nature, but also the soule is with the body both euill-fauouredly araied with sinne, and guiltie before God of euerlasting

Originall Sinne.

wrath and damnation, except it be regenerate and borne anew, whereby the spots of sinne are washed away by the Word, the Sacraments, and the vertue of the holy Ghost. This seemeth not possible, that soules which be pure and dearely beloued of God, being seuerally framed, and closed within the body, should as soone as they are inclosed, be infected with the contagious venome of the corporall substance, and displease their maker so sore, that for the soule sinnes sake which the soule brought not with it, but the Inne (that is, the body) committed, which God sent the soule into, should be enforced to suffer and sustaine eternall paines as well as the body. Also it is certaine in the wicked, that not onely their bodies which they receiued of the corrupt nature of their parents shall be damned at the last day, but their soules also. Therefore how could God choose but be partly the cause of sinne? how could hee be but vnrighteous, if he had created and enspired a pure soule of it selfe, and yet straightwayes for all that would count it guiltie and damne it no lesse, then if it had committed in it selfe that sinne that is called Originall sinne? But the Psalme saieth; *Thou art GOD that wouldest no iniquitie.*

Anima an sit ex traduce?

Paul saith, *We were by Nature*, or, *we are borne the children of Gods wrath.* If a pure soule be ioyned to the bodily substance which is deriued and defiled with sinne from his parents, how are we then borne wholly the children of wrath? For it is certaine, that *Paul* speaketh not onely of the sinfull body, but of the soule also that is ioyned to the body, or of the whole man. *Dauid* saith, *Behold I was conceiued in wickednesse, and in sinnes my mother bare me.* He sheweth in plaine words that hee hath all wholly deriued, not onely after the body, but also after the soule, euen from his mother (that is, from his mothers substance) Originall sinne, ignorance of God, doubtfulnesse, distrust, wauering motions from God, and readinesse vnto sinne: All these, he saith, are planted in his Nature from his mother; and therefore he thinketh, that hee receiued a sinfull soule of his mother, by a certaine naturall generation also. Besides that, man doth beget man like to himselfe. But man is a reasonable creature, he is made not onely of a brutish body, but of a reasonable soule also: Therefore man begetteth not an imperfect thing, that is to say, a body without a soule, but the body and soule together. It maketh no matter, though we cannot discerne the manner how, and though it seeme an absurditie, that one soule is deriued of another soule, one spirituall thing of another spirituall thing: For GOD is almighty, and like as he is able to make the body which is composed of the elements, eternall and vncorruptible, as all our bodies shall be after this life (for among other Articles, wee beleeue

beleeue the resurrection of the body) euen so according to his owne Maiesty, he is able to conserue that order of nature, which hee hath instituted from the beginning, and bring to passe that out of the heauenly matter which the soule hath, another heauenly matter shall also spring and be begotten. But what meane I? seeing all this whole matter is still an obscure case, and peraduenture, GOD of his singular decreed counsell, will put off that question vnto the life in another world; and for as much as the soule catcheth no perill by it, therefore a man may freely leaue it in a meane; neither is it to be reckoned any Heresie, whether a man hold on this side, or that.

I remember that the reuerend Father of blessed memory, Doctor *Martin Luther*, in a certaine disputation of this controuersie, reasoned many things on this part that I last spake of, and that the excellent learned man, Doctor *Pomeraue*, did vehemently vrge and beseech him, that for as much as he had so weighty and so many reasons to defend his opinion withall, that the soule commeth of naturall off-spring, he would resolutely determine what sentence should bee giuen; but good *Luther* would not. Hee confessed plainely whereunto he would leane; but seeing *Austen*, and other graue Doctors of the Church, had left it as a matter in doubt, he said, That he would leaue it also in the meane, as a matter not yet throughly enough discussed. Therefore in the one and thirtieth Proposition of these Theses which beginne, *Verbum in Diuinitate*, hee saith, Those that haue thought the soule to come of naturall off-spring, seeme to iudge not all contrary to the meaning of the Scriptures. And in the six and fortieth Proposition. Albeit, a Christian man may with Saint *Austen*, and the whole Church, be ignorant of this matter without perill, &c. These examples haue I somewhat more largely rehearsed, that the rest of the same sort may so much the easier be applyed and discerned. Now by little and little I will draw neerer to the matter.

There be also in the Scriptures expressed the Articles of the Faith, which are both euident and vnchangeable, so that no Neuttaltie may be granted in them. That is to say, God to mankinde, which hee made to his owne likenesse, whereof his will is to be acknowledged and glorified both here and in the life to come, hath his owne selfe reuealed a certaine, cleare, and perpetuall doctrine of his essence and will, as much as was necessary vnto that knowledge and glorifying of him, and the saluation of our soules. This doctrine he wrapped not vp in darkenesse, so as no man might bee able to vnderstand it or expound it aright. For

if

if it were like vnto Sibylles leaues (as they say) what good would it doe vs.

But he hath set it forth clearely and plainely, so as no manner of man can finde any fault in it for obscurity. Yea, hee hath also adorned and confirmed that doctrine with very many such miracles and testimonies, as no Religion euer had. And in this Word of God, all godly folkes in all ages haue quieted themselues; that is, they were fully perswaded that according to this reuealed Will of GOD, they haue righteousnesse and life: and in this faith they haue praised God, they haue called vpon God, and beene patient in troubles when they haue beene wretchedly entreated. They haue also rightly instructed their posterity, not in fantasticall dreames, but in the true Doctrine which God himselfe hath openly proclaimed. God hath also bound all people throughout all the wide world vnto the Word, as I shall tell you anon. And the Word of God, wherein the knowledge and glory of God, and the saluation of our soules is contained, is called a mystery, because it is onely the wisdome of God and not of man: that is to say, not knowne by nature. For albeit some sparkes of the law remaine yet still in man, which should (doubtlesse) haue beene a great deale more excellent, if man had continued in his entire perfection of nature, yet concerning that true essence of God, and of the good will of God towards vs sinners, of righteousnesse without the law, of inuocation in the Name of the Mediatour, of patience vnder the crosse and in death, of the manner of the resurrection, and of eternall life, man had knowne nothing at all, had not God come out of his secret seat, and declared these matters by open proclamation. And therefore this heauenly wisdome and doctrine of mans saluation must bee drawne out of his originall Fountaine. God hath also declared his vnspeakeable great mercy, in that he hath not only brought this wonderfull and secret wisdome out of Heauen, but also least it should be forgotten of them that come after, and least they should faile, as it were, in so darke a night as a man might see nothing, and so keepe nothing of that doctrine in remembrance, he caused it to be faithfully registred by his instruments peculiarly appointed to that vse, in certaine sure Rolles, that is, in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, whereout that Doctrine might euidently be knowne vnto all people throughout all the whole world, and by this meanes to endure continually to the worlds end. For that cause when Tyrants haue often times gone about with fire and sword to destroy the Prophets and Apostles Bookes, yet hath he preserued them in all ages, and stirred vp godly and wholsome

The word of God is a mystery. 1 Cor. 2. 7, 8

wholsome teachers, which, in case the truth and true Seruice of God, haue beene at any time violently assaulted by the members of the Deuill, haue wiped away and remoued corrupt expositions from the Word of GOD, as it were a Miste from the Sunne, and brought it vnto the sound interpretation againe. This is such a manner of Doctrine, that without it no man can possibly acknowledge God aright, nor call vpon God, nor glorifie God as he ought to doe, no, nor attaine righteousnesse, nor the holy Ghost, nor yet eternall life. And therefore in this heauenly Doctrine, or in the Articles of the Faith, it shall be lawfull for no man to stand in doubt, or to make any halting on both sides of them, but it is necessary for euery body to know and embrace the truth, and looke what is not agreeable vnto it, to turne away and renounce as erronious and blasphemous. But what these Articles be, I reckon it lost labour to make ouer many words in rehearsing of them in this place. They are plainly comprised in the Creedes of the Apostles, of *Nice*, and *Athanasius*, and those we iudge and beleeue doe agree with the perpetuall meaning of the Prophets and Apostles writings. Now therefore I will open two or three causes, why it is not free for a man to doubt in these Articles, or to follow a certaine meane iudgement betweene both.

Why a man may not doubt in the Articles of the faith.

The first reason is, because God himselfe hath reuealed that same Word, and hath bound all folkes of all nations by an vnchangeable Commandement both to embrace, learne, and confesse this word, *Deuter. 4. You shall not adde vnto the Word which I speake vnto you, nor take from it. Keepe the precepts of the Lord your God, which I command you. Deut. 5. You shall not slide, neither vnto the right hand nor to the left, but you shall walke by the way which your Lord hath commanded, that you may liue, and that it may goe well with you.* Also, *Deuter. 12. What I command thee, that onely doe vnto the Lord, put nothing to, nor take any thing fro.* Such sentences as these, are oftentimes rehearsed in other places. So *Iosua* is bound to the Word, and is commanded not to lay downe the Booke of the Law out of his hands, but to study in it continually.

For God deliuered vnto the people of *Israel* his Word not vncertaine, but certaine and plaine, and would haue all both to vnderstand and follow it, as many as purpose to be of the number that pleaseth him. And the Prophets declare, that they bring and set abroad the Word of God: and therefore they require all folkes to hearken to this Word at their mouth, as well as if God himselfe spake out of Heauen, without back-sliding or waueting. *Esay* by and by at the first dash, maketh such

a thundring, that he calleth Heauen and earth to record. *Hearken*, saith hee, *O Heauen and earth, what the Lord hath spoken.* And in the 59. Chapter. *This is my Couenant with them* (saith the Lord.) *My Spirit which is in thee, and my words which I haue put in thy mouth shall not depart from thy mouth, nor from the mouth of thy seede* (saith the Lord) *from this time forth and for euermore.*

In the new Testament the Father of Heauen himselfe establisheth this Commandement, when he beareth record vnto his sonne. For thus hee maketh open Proclamation out of the Cloud, *This is my beloued Sonne, in whom I am well pleased, heare him.*

It is an earnest Sermon surely, which the Maiesty of God himselfe preacheth out of his most high Pulpit, Heauen, and out of his owne priuy Chamber, yea, and that of the greatest matters of all, and of most weighty importance. For in these few words hee exhibiteth vnto the whole world (according to his former promise) their Messias, and beautifyeth him with most high commendations. First, he describeth his person and dignity, and saith, This is my Sonne, not by adoption, as we are all made by Christ, as many as beleeue in him: but the onely begotten Sonne, coeternall and consubstantiall with the Father, which now by the wonderfull counsell and worke of God, being vnited with mans nature, is in these words presented vnto vs. Then hee giueth warning what his office is, and saith, We must giue him audience. Therefore hee hath to declare vnto men from the decreed ordinance of Gods Maiesty: that is, it cannot be chosen, but he must needs haue the office of a teacher. And therwithall the heauenly Commandement is inclosed; Heare him: by the which all folkes throughout the whole world are bound to giue audience to this one persons word, and to none but his. For he only hath commission to proclaime and declare the secrets of God. And of what matters he preached, the Sermons that the Euangelists haue enrolled make plaine mention: that is to say, of the true knowledge of God (as pertaining to his essence and will) of sinne, of righteousnesse, of the Resurrection, of life, of the spirituall and euerlasting Kingdome of Christ, of true calling vpon God, and other seruices due vnto God. Hereunto pertaineth the saying, *Psal.* 2. *He hath ordained mee a King vpon his holy hill of Sion, and I shall preach his Commandement.* Also, *Kisse the Sonne, lest the Lord be angry, and you perish from the right way.* And concerning the Apostles, Christ saith, *He that heareth you heareth mee.* For hee sent thē forth into all the world, not to spred abroad new opinions imagined of their owne braine, but to be notable and perpetuall witnesses of the

Doctrine

Doctrine and merit of Christ; he installeth them therefore with this authority for certainties sake, and willeth all men to heare them, as well as if he himselfe spake the same words out of Heauen, that the Apostles doe in their ministery. And therefore he saith in another place, *It is not you that speake, but the Spirit of God which is in you.* And for that cause also, those Preachers take vpon them the name of Apostles, and say plainly, They are the seruants of Christ. *Paul* was so bold thereby as to say, *If any man preach any other Gospell vnto you then we haue done, cursed bee he.* And God hath oftentimes, with many most grieuous slaughters, reuenged the contemning of his Word, and with suffering the falling into heathenish opinions, which the Prophets call by a very filthy fowle terme, Whoredome.

Hereby therefor it is euident, that all men are straightly bound by the Commandement of God, to heare that Doctrine, which God hath manifestly declared by his owne Word, and hath put it into certaine persons mouthes hauing singular testimonies of God (and by them hath enrolled it into certaine monuments of record, that is, into the Prophets and Apostles writings, and hath sealed it vp with great Miracles) and according to that Doctrine and none other to acknowledge and serue God.

Therefore it is clearer then the Sunne-light at noone-dayes, that a man may not lawfully doubt in this doctrine, nor be a Neuter.

Then it followeth consequently, that all those are too farre wide from the truth, which fall from this Doctrine, and either imagine another themselues, or else follow some other that is already deuised to their hands. *Esay* saith, *Hee that speaketh not according to this Word, shall not haue the morning light.*

The second reason is. There be two Contradictions (that is to say, two Doctrines, the one cleane contrary to the other) which cannot possibly be brought to a concord by any art, either of any Angell, man, or Diuell: the Word of God and mens doctrines, whether they were hatched vp within the Church or without the Church, and whosoeuer was the Author of them, whether Mahomet, or Pope, Bishop, or King. For it is a sure vnfailing principle: There is one truth, and more then one there cannot be.

Then whatsoeuer varieth from that one, must needes be no truth. For truth agreeth with truth. Now then, the Word of God is onely one agreeing with it selfe, euerlasting, proclaimed by Christ out of the eternall Fathers bosome, and contained in the Bookes of the Prophets and Apostles. Gods Word and mans doctrine.

Apostles. Contrariwise, the Doctrines of men are variable, and swarue too farre from the onely word of GOD, and differ among themselues more than cold and heat.

Take example onely at the Papists Doctrine, and conferre the sincere Word of God with it. The Papists teach, that men are able in this life to satisfie the Law of God. This is their vnmoueable Principle, and then out of it they draw and set vp what they list themselues. Contrariwise, the Word of God affirmeth, that men are not able to satisfie the Law of God. And what is the let? Euen the poyson of sinne, which remaineth yet still euen in them that be borne anew, so that it infecteth and marreth euen those workes that be most excellent. This proposition is also confirmed by the greatest workes of all other, by the sending of Christ into the world, and by his Passion, Resurrection and Ascention. For if man be able to fulfill the Law, Christ dyed in vaine, and all his benefits are of none effect. But that is not possible.

Marke the difference betweene Gods word and the Papists doctrine.

The Papists striue with hand and foot (as they say) that the perfect fulfilling of the law is our ownedoing. But the Word of God sheweth contrary, that the perfect fulfilling of the Law is not our deed, but Christs, which wee receiue by imputation (that is, by free pardon) through faith.

Christ is the end of the law, to iustifie all that beleeue, *Rom.* 10. The Papists say, that man is partly iustifyed, and pleaseth God, and made inheritour of eternall life by the merit of Christ freely, as pertaining to his first acceptation, and partly by charity to make vp the matter: that is to say, that man is iustifyed, made perfectly righteous, and getteth eternall life by his owne deedes doing. Contrariwise, the Word of God affirmeth that man is at the beginning and ending, first and last iustified, accepted, pleaseth God, and made inheritour of eternall blessednesse by the only merit of Christ, which is applyed by faith, freely without workes either going before or comming after. *God loued the world so, that hee gaue his onely begotten Sonne, that all that beleeue in him should not perish, but haue life euerlasting, Iohn* 3. The Papists cry out, that good workes are meritorous vnto Saluation. Contrariwise, the Word of God taketh away all occasion of boasting from vs, and reporteth openly, that mans workes are not meritorious vnto saluation.

For the onely worke of Christ is meritorious in this case, so as it is sufficient for all that beleeue, *Heb.* 10. The Papists teach, that we must stand wauering in a doubt, whether our sinnes be certainly forgiuen, or whether we be in the state of grace, and please God or not, and so con-

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tinue still to our dying day. Contrariwise, the word of God requireth a direct plaine faith, and an vndoubted trust, that euery one resolue with himselfe so certainly that he is presently pardoned of his sins for Christs sake, as he is sure that he heareth the word of God, which *is the power of God to saue all that beleeue, Rom.* 1. And as surely as he heareth the Absolution with his eares, and as certainly as he receiueth in the Lords Supper, the most excellent pledge of this matter, euen the Sacrament of Christs body and bloud, so is he truly vnited with Christ. The Papists doe prate as if they were wood, that we must not onely pray vnto God, but also vnto Saints, though not as helpers (loe how new Religion hath combred them now:) yet at least as intercessours and petitioners. Contrariwise the word of God requireth, that the honour of Inuocation and prayer be done to none but to God alone: *Thou shalt honour the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serue, Deut. 6.* The Papists cast vp the nose into the winde and cracke, that the Church is tied to the Bishop of *Rome* and his Colledge. Contrariwise the word of God bindeth the Church neither to Person, Place, nor time, but faith; *where two or three be gathered together in my name, I will be in the mids among them.* Also, *My sheepe shall heare my voyce.* Item, *I haue perceiued for a truth, that God is no accepter of persons, but that in all kinds of people, whosoeuer feareth him, and worketh righteousnesse, is accepted with him.*

The Papists teach that the Lords supper is a Sacrifice, that is, an oblation to purchase remission of sinnes withall, both to themselues and to others, not onely to the quicke, but also to the dead: and that the one part of it must be carried about to be gased at and worshipped, and yet not to be receiued: and that another part be nipped away quite from the lay-people. Contrariwise, the word of God affirmeth, that the Lords supper is not a sacrifice wherewith we make Sacrifice to God, but a most excellent benefit, that God maketh vs partakers of, and is auaileable vnto vs, not by gasing at, but by the vse and partaking of it: as the words sound; *Take, eate; take, drinke*: and that it is a cruell sacriledge to take away the Cup, where neuertheless by Gods appointment it is expressed in the very words of the institution to be common to all: *Drinke ye all of this* (saith Christ:) And seeing the bloud of Christ was shed aswell for the lay-people as for the Ministers of the word; that kinde which ought to put men in remembrance of Christs bloud shed, may be denyed to no state of men by any right, or by any honest pretence.

These and such like points of doctrines (to reckon vp all which were too long) are farre more contrary one to another, and can much lesse be

brought to agree together, than fire and yce, drought and moisture, seeing they be extremities and placed in the vttermost step, and no mid-way can be possibly found. For the Authors themselues are one contrary to another: and the matters themselues are one contrary to another. The one part hath Gods word, the other hath mans word, which albeit now and then (to cast a myst before the eyes of the vnlearned) cloake their errors with some texts of Scripture, yet they doe it with extreame iniurie and reproach to the word of God.

Besides that, thou hast the vnchangeable word of God, If any man preach any other Gospell than that you haue receiued, cursed bee hee. Therefore a man may not lawfully be a Neuter in this behalfe. Either heare the word of God and beleeue it stedfastly, or follow the lying glosses of men, and hurle away the word of God. If thou beleeuest that thou art accepted vnto grace through Christ, then thou must needs giue ouer trusting in thy workes; but if thou seeke to be iustified by thy works, thou canst not choose but cast away Christ.

And seeing it is euen so, what a madnesse, nay, what a mad woodnesse is it for a man to busie himselfe so much to bring these Contradictions to agreement? what a presumptuous and witlesse Bedlam brained part is it for vs to intermingle those things that seeme agreeable vnto our reason with the high mysterie of God, and so to make an horrible and deformed mingle mangle? God hath declared his plaine, certaine, sure word from heauen, confirmed it with Miracles, and bound all people vnto that word by his earnest commandement: and yet we go about to mingle our own dreames, nay, our dregges that sticke in our drowsie blind reason, with the most bright sunne, and to reforme the eternall and vnspeakable wisedome of him that made all things. O horrible, and strange presumption!

The third reason is like vnto this that went before, that there is but one onely doctrine that quieteth the conscience, and bringeth righteousnesse and eternall life; and that doctrine is the onely word of Christ, which he set forth first in Paradise, then afterward by the Prophets, thirdly by himselfe when he was made man according to the Prophets sayings: fourthly, by the Apostles and their successours and Disciples. And the summe of that doctrine is this; *The womans seede shall breake the Serpents head, Gen.* 3. In this saying consisteth all the whole old Testament. And in the new Testament the same sentence is rehearsed and expressed more clearely; *God so loued the world, that he gaue his onely begotten sonne, that all that beleeue in him should not perish but haue life euerlasting, Iohn* 3.

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And this sentence is expounded by all the whole new Testament. And as for all other doctrins how sweet & pleasant soeuer they seeme, they spring out of nothing else but out of the law, as out of the onely and most plentious fountaine. Therefore like as the law (as the Scripture reporteth) doth worke wrath, and can doe no otherwise (for all the whole Nature of man is sinfull and guilty) euen so doth all other Doctrine nothing else, but feare, wound, kill, and damne the conscience. Whereof it is plaine, that there is no Doctrine auailable in any wise to bring to vs forgiuenesse of sinnes and eternall life. Now let vs in few words try out the Papists doctrine and ours in the principall Article of all, and see which of them a mans conscience may the better and more surely be quieted in. For surely the doctrine cannot faile, but be most neere vnto the truth, wherein a mans conscience can feele perfect rest and ioy: For the truth was declared from heauen for this cause, or else it had not needed that God should haue reuealed any thing: for all such motiues as cause wauering of minde, spring vp fast enough in our owne hearts without any outward trauaile. Our aduersaries now for many yeeres haue taught with much striuing and contention, yea, with sword, fire, water, and plenty of Martyrs blood; That man is able to accomplish the obedience of the Law, and consequently be iustified by his owne workes.

They faine a certaine grace that commeth of themselues, and put a difference betweene Redemption it selfe and Iustification, or receiuing of a sinner, which is nothing else but very iugling casts to florish out their lies withall. First, weigh the originall fountaine of that doctrine where they say, wee are iustified by our works either alone without the merit of CHRIST, or by our workes and the merit of CHRIST together, as those teach that are the more wily and subtill. Are not these seedes of the Law? yea, indeed they are. For the Law preacheth of workes, and promiseth iustification and life for workes sake. And doth not reason, which God hath ingraffed part of the law into, tell the same tale? For naturally we thinke, that God accepteth all well doers, and hateth euill doers. But now looke not at the Law as it were through a creuise of a window, not superficially, but plucke away *Moses* vaile and looke vpon his bright shining face, that is, looke into the heart of the Law. For hereof commeth all the errour, in that our Pharises and Iusticiaries doe clap a foule thicke vaile vpon *Moses* face, and see nothing else commanded in the Law but outward discipline, which because it may be done in some sort, straightwaies they swallow vp all the whole ten Commandements at one sup, and prate like fine Doctors, that they are able to

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Nay, of superabomination.

fulfill the ten Commandements, yea to vtter themselues more plainly in their colour, they faine workes of supererogation, and imagine a certaine perfection aboue the Law, that is more than needeth. This is vgly palpable darkneſſe, where on very many before our dayes caught hold, and very many yet ſtill ſet much ſtore by it. But Chriſt leadeth vs in to the bowels of the Law, where hee ſaith; *Loue the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy ſoule, and with all thy minde, and loue thy neighbour as thy ſelfe, Mat. 22. Deut. 6.* And *Paul* ſaith, *The Law is ſpirituall, Rom. 7.* Loe, here is required not onely outward obedience, but inward obedience alſo, and that moſt perfect, full of obedience in all points, to the vttermoſt of all the poſſible powers that man hath: ſo that if there be any thing in mans life (though it be neuer ſo little) that is contrary to the law of God, it maketh a man guilty of the law, and bringeth the puniſhment of the law. Yea, all the holy Scripture doth moſt chiefly of all reproue and condemne the inward ſinnes, as ignorance of God, diſtruſt, doubtfulneſſe, ſecurity, concupiſcence, enuy, hate, and all the ſourging ſea of motions repugnant againſt the will of God, whereof mans heart is alwayes full: For when the obedience of the Law is talked of aright, it is not meant of certaine vertues, which mens eyes are blinded withall, but of all the whole obedience both inward and outward, that may conſiſt and is able to ſtand in the iudgement of God: For God doth not (like a temporall Iudge) giue iudgement vpon outward cauſes onely, but hee ſearcheth the hearts and the reines, and will haue the whole nature of man with all his members, yea euen the ſlendreſt members of all, bent wholly to ſerue him. And in his moſt iuſt diſpleaſure he curſeth and damneth all that doe not declare the praiſe of both inward and outward obedience. For the iudgement is both vnmoueable and laſteth for euer; *Curſed is euery one that continueth not in all things, that are written in the booke of the Law, to doe them in deed, Deut. 27.* Now therefore let vs enter through this open ſentence pronounced by the mouth of Chriſt and his meſſengers, whom he put peculiarly a part to miniſter his word, into the priuie chamber of the Law, and let vs looke ſtedfaſtly vpon *Moſes* face, and ſearch our ſelues whether wee be ſuch inwardly and outwardly as the Law requireth vs to be. Therefore remember thy ſelfe, whether thou haue ſo cleare knowledge of God in thy heart, that no darkneſſe remaineth in it. Doth it not ſeeme vnto thee now and then an abſurdity and a thing not poſſible, that God ſhould be three in perſons and one in ſubſtance? Doth not thy heart ſtand in doubt now and then of the good will of God towards thee, and thinke that God regardeth not thee as

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he doth other folkes? Doest thou not thinke sometime, that thou art destitute of all mens helpe, and therefore thou shalt be the most miserable of all men? Wouldest thou not be fainer many times, or rather alwaies to haue worldly meanes, which thou seest presently with thine eyes, to trust vnto, and hold thee vp by them as with a staffe, then to giue ouer thy selfe altogether to the decreed pleasure and gouernance of God, speeially in such cases as reason seeth no sure hauen to rest in, nor can finde any thing to settle it selfe vpon? Doth not this and the like thoughts of feare often perplex thy minde: Alas, I am a sinner, thus and thus haue I offended, who can tell whether God will haue me or no, seeing hee is righteous, and abhorreth sinners? Doest thou not thinke when thou art vexed with troubles, miseries, or sickneſse, that it is a token of Gods wrath? Doest thou not grant, and wouldest rather that God should loue other after that fashion more then thee? Doest thou neuer feele in thy heart any sparkes of anger, at least, if not the whole flame of lusts, and euen most extreame readinesse vnto euill? Finally, doest thou liue so all the dayes of thy life, that thou offendest no body in gesture, word, nor deed, and that thou seekest to doe other men good as diligently and willingly as to thy selfe? Doest thou ouerslip nothing in the workes of thy vocation? Verily if thou haue hit this marke so hard, so straight, that thou maiest truely make thy boast thereof, no doubt, but thou art worthy to bee crowned with the fauour of God and euerlasting life. But I would see but euen one man stand out since the fall of *Adam* (Christ excepted, which is not onely man, but also very God) that can truely say thus of himselfe, or deserueth this commendation. Doubtlesse if there were but one such, all the whole Scripture must needes be false. I speake a great word but it is vndoubtedly true. Aduise thy selfe well therefore, as I haue bidden thee, and examine thine owne heart, will and minde, if thou canst be perswaded thus of thy selfe. Out of doubt thou shalt bee faine to confesse, that there is more euill in thy flesh then good; that blindnesse in thy minde, that peruerse readinesse and lust in thy will to doe those things that are contrary vnto God, and a confusion of affections in thine heart, beare rule and swarme by heapes. No, the outward conuersation cannot possibly hit the marke of perfection, as it ought to doe. This al that are in their right wits, cannot choose but confes. As for those that are bewitched, it maketh small matter what they say. But if thou haue small trust to thy selfe, at least way heare the reports that Gods booke maketh, which vnlesse thou be robbed of thy wit, thou canst not choose but grant vnto. *Genes.* 8. *The imaginations and thoughts of mans heart*

are bent vnto euill euen from his youth. Ier.17. Mans heart is frowrd and vnsearchable. Psal.51. Behold, I was conceiued in wickednesse, and in sinne my mother bare me. Ephes.2. We are by nature the children of wrath as others are; we are all such when we come out of our mothers wombe into this world, that all the whole lumpe of our substance is infected with originall poyson, and become guilty before God so sore, that *except we be regenerate and borne anew of water and of the holy Ghost* (as Christ teacheth, *Iohn 3.*) *we cannot enter into the kingdome of God.* But thou wilt say, These sentences be spoken of them that be not regenerate. But those which are borne anew, may satisfie the Law of God at full; for they be new creatures, in whom the holy Ghost hath his dwelling place, and begetteth and stirreth vp new motions in them. Harken therefore, what the word of God, which cannot lye, saith of them also. *Psa.130. Lord if thou wouldest looke straightly vpon wickednesses, who could abide it. Psal.143. Enter not into iudgement with thy seruant, for in thy sight no man liuing shall be iustified.* O immortall God! what a thunderclap is this? All (saith he) are guilty before God, not onely for the corrupt sinfull nature, which they bring from their mothers wombe into this world, but for the innumerable sinnes which they haue defiled their life withall, contrary to the will of God, so sore that no body could euer stand forth before the face of God, if man should be iudged after his owne workes. *Psal.14. All* (quoth he) *are slidden backe, all are become vnprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one.* Christ teacheth all to pray after one sort: *And forgiue vs our trespasses, Matth.6. Rom.1. The wrath of God is reuealed from heauen vpon all wickednesse and vnrighteousnesse of men.* And *Rom.3. There is no difference, all haue sinned, and want the glory which they ought to haue before God. Rom.11. God hath shut vp all vnder vnbeliefe.*

How wilt thou winde thy selfe then out of this number of all, except thou proue the word of God a lyer? *If we say we haue no sinne we deceiue our selues, and there is no truth in vs. 1 Iohn 1.* Therefore thou hast thy owne nature a witnesse, which if thou looke throughly into it, proueth thee a flat sinner. Then thou hast the word of God, which affirmeth the same; therefore thou art not able to fulfill the Law: For a sinner thou art and a sinner thou remainest, as long as thou liuest in thy mortall body. *The wages of sinne* (saith *Paul*) *is death.* And therefore death that deuoureth all men, yea euery one, euen the most holiest, is a great and a graue witnesse, that all are sinners, and that none accomplisheth the Law of God: For if there could any one be found in the wide world, that fulfilled the Law perfectly, death by right could haue nothing to doe with him.

him. But none euer escaped the hands of death, nor neuer shall doe, while the world goeth about; therefore all haue beene and are vnder the curse of the Law. As for that doctrine in other places of fulfilling the Law, which the godly doe, it must be vnderstood of imputation and incoation, or beginning, as I haue told you before.

Therefore seeing this is a plaine matter, it followeth most clearely, that no man can content God nor bee forgiuen of his sinnes by his owne workes. For God (as it is to be spoken and spoken againe) is not satisfied as man is, with an outward obedience, how good soeuer it be, but he requireth an integritie and most absolute perfection in all the powers of man. And seeing he findeth not that, he doth according to the sentence of the Law and his owne eternall Iustice pronounce all damned, as pertaining to their owne workes.

Now therefore take heede and aduise thee well, whether thy conscience, when thou art at the point of death, at such time as thy sinne which hath laine long at thy doores and taken quiet rest, bee truely awaked indeed, so as thou perceiuest after a certaine manner the vglinesse and greatnesse of it, the wrath of God and thy deserued damnation, can quiet it selfe in the obedience that thou hast done vnto the Law? How shalt thou be certified in thine heart, that thy merits, or other folkes merits, either doe counterpoise thy sinnes, or that the worthinesse and excellency of them be weightier then thy sinnes are?

This is a hard matter, and there can no conscience quiet it selfe therein: For this doubt shall alwayes runne in thy minde; Alas who can tell, how I shall stand before God, perchance my sinnes are moe and more hainous then I am able to counteruaile with the merit of my workes? This same wrangling and wrastling is a testimonie of a weake and a wauering conscience, yea rather of a conscience that despaireth of his owne merits. But the sentence is giuen: *He that beleeueth not in the sonne, hath not eternall life, but the wrath of God abideth vpon him, Iohn* 3. And, *whatsoeuer is not of faith, is sinne, Rom.* 14. These doubters therefore, if they continue so still, get no eternall life. For a man must beleeue stedfastly while hee liueth in this world, and haue a taste of the grace of God and eternall life in himselfe. This case is out of all peraduenture, if it could be indifferently acknowledged; but our braineseicke and witlesse bewitched aduersaries damne the things that they know not; and as for these exercises and wranglings of conscience, they know either nothing or very little of them.

Now on the contrary part, consider the Doctrine which our Churches

professe and teach, and search out the matter diligently, whether the conscience may finde rest and ioy to settle it selfe in it. Our Doctrine is, that all are sinners by nature, and that the remnant of sinnes the filth of originall poison, and a froward inclination, abide still euen in them that are regenerate or Iustified: so that albeit a certaine obedience towards the Law bee begun in beleeuers through the holy Ghost, yet it is but begun onely in this life, and not so perfect as it ought to be. The beleeuers fulfill the Law by imputation through Christ, that is, are iustified or forgiuen their sinnes, made righteous, haue eternall life and the holy ghost, and be made heires of the kingdome of heauen, not by any merits of their owne, either going before or comming after regeneration, but freely for the onely merit of Christ, which is applied by Faith as the instrument to receiue it by.

I haue already proued, that no man fulfilleth the Law of God. For although there be a certaine difference betweene heathen peoples workes and Christian folkes workes, yet when the question is of mans allowance vnto life euerlasting before God, the workes of the most holy are nothing but dung, as *Paul* tearmeth them, much lesse are they meritorious. If *Abraham* (saith *Paul, Rom.*4.) *were Iustified by the workes of the Law, he hath to boast of, but not with God.* What could be spoken more apparently, that all that this noble worthy man *Abraham* hath to boast of his most excellent works, is with men, and hath no place in the worke of Iustification before God; that is to say, he deserued not to be accepted with God through his owne holinesse. But that wee are iustified freely before God, and obtaine saluation, righteousnesse, and eternall life onely by Faith in Christ, without respect of our owne worthinesse, it is most euidently declared by the testimonies both of the old Testament and new, and by the examples of all iustified men. *Gen.*15. *Abraham beleeued God, and it was counted vnto him for righteousnesse.*

Doest thou heare the most ancient record how the most high Patriarke was iustified? Doubtlesse by imputation, that is by free pardon onely. And how? Surely, in that he laid hold on the Messias by faith; a full and perfect perswasion with himselfe, that he was in the state of grace, and should be inheritour of euerlasting life, according to the promises by the free benefit of the Messias, although he were therof vnworthy for the manifold spots of sinne that he had. And this word imputation or free pardon is added for good cause and consideration. The cruell murthering thiefe, in case the Magistrate set him at libertie, hath this benefit freely by pardon to be pronounced iust. And so *Abraham* was made

righteous

righteous by free pardon. For he was guilty before God for his inward and outward sinnes, no lesse then the Theefe was that had committed many bloudy murthers. And therefore *Esay* speaketh most comfortably according to my saying in his first Chapter, *If your sinnes were like scarlet, they shall be made whiter then snow, and if they were red as purple, they shall be as woall.* So, *Psal.* 32. *Blessed are they whose wickednesses are forgiuen, and whose sinnes are couered. Blessed is the man vnto whom the Lord hath not imputed sinne.*

He calleth none blessed but them whose sinnes be couered. Then he pronounceth not them blessed that deserue iustification by their owne deedes, but vnto whom it is freely giuen. Christ accepteth sinners freely, and preacheth forgiuenesse of sinnes vnto them, and affirmeth in plaine words, *that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners vnto repentance, Mat.* 9. *Come vnto me all you that labour and are heauy laden, and I shall refresh you, Mat.* 11. *This is the will of him that sent me, that all that see the Sonne, and beleeue in him, haue euerlasting life, Ioh.* 6. *There is none other name vnder Heauen giuen vnto men, wherein we must be saued, Act.* 4. And, *vnto him all the Prophets beare record, that all receiue remission of their sinnes that beleeue in him, Act.* 10. And *Paul* knitteth vp the summe of this matter most cleerely in his proposition; *But now* (saith he) *the righteousnesse of God is manifestly shewed without the Law, hauing witnesse of the Law and Prophets.* And that *righteousnesse commeth by the Faith of Iesus Christ, vnto all and vpon all that beleeue in him, Rom.* 3. And by and by followeth a very euident declaration: For hee had already spoken past mans reason.

For there is no difference (saith he) all haue sinned and want the glory of God, and are iustified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Iesus, whom God hath made a mercy-seat by faith in his bloud. And in this same Chapter hee beateth in the same the third time: *we iudge, or we certainly determine, that man is iustified by faith without the workes of the law.* What can any man speake more plainly? For he putteth a difference betweene Gods righteousnesse and mans, & saith, that the righteousnesse of God is manifestly shewed without the Law, and yet hath witnesse in *Moses* and the Prophets, and that it commeth freely vnto all that beleeue in Christ. Here thou hearest workes plainly put away and shut out of doores, as pertaining to the obtaining of the Iustice of God, which is of value before God. For this is a righteousnesse without the Law, which commeth freely. *By grace you are saued through faith, and that not of your selues. For it is the gift of God and not of workes, least any man should boast, Ephes.* 2.

All boasting (as thou hearest) is quite taken away from vs. But what neede we to make long heaping together of so many testimonies, seeing the whole Scripture consisteth in this one point, and none can bee ignorant of this sentence, except he will be wilfully and stubbornely blinde, specially for as much as it is cleerely set forth now these many yeeres in writing, by the greatest learned and most profound wise men, so that no man may henceforth pretend any more ignorance. With this Doctrine all examples of all ages doe accord. Looke vpon *Adam* and *Abraham*, *Peter* and *Paul*, they were all iustified by one and the selfe same meanes, and none otherwise than the Thiefe which was hanged on the Crosse, that is to say, freely, without respect of their owne merits, for the staine Sacrifice, Christs sake. So *Iohn Baptist* saith, that *Christ is the Lambe which taketh away the sinnes of the world.* In which word (world) he includeth both himselfe and *Mary* the virgin and all.

Lay this to thy conscience that trembleth and quaketh when it acknowledgeth his sinnes, and beholdeth the wrath of God, and proue whether it can quiet it selfe here, and perceiue any gladnesse, and feele the grace of God towards it selfe, and euerlasting life, or not. It is out of all peraduenture, that the conscience is in greater distresse, when it beholdeth his owne sinnes, the wrath of God, and eternall damnation, when death assaulteth nature most bitterly and vehemently, and hath no longer hope of life, then at other times, when he is in bodily health, and when he thinketh death to be most farre off.

In this behalfe the minde compareth these two together, himselfe and his sinnes on the one part, and the Iudgements of God, and the wrath of God against sinnes, and eternall damnation on the other part. And first he seeketh counsell and helpe naturally at himselfe. But no mans conscience (as I said before) is able certainely to determine, that his merits are greater and worthier then his sinnes, so that for the worthinesse of his owne workes sake, God remitteth his wrath, taketh away the paine, and giueth righteousnesse. For the conscience shall first of all cry still, that his sinnes are many more, and much greater then his good workes. The Word of God also saith nay; *No man liuing shall be iustified in thy sight.* Also, *Lord, If thou wouldst looke straitly vnto sinne, who should abide it?* And, when you haue done all that you are bound to doe, say, We are vnprofitable seruants, wee haue done but our duties. Then when hee findeth no ease with himselfe to hold vp the quaking conscience withall, he must needes looke about him to others besides himselfe, whether he can haue any sure hope of saluation there or not. But when

he hath done all, he shall be able to finde rest of conscience in no man, either quicke or dead, nor in any merits, either of Monke, Cannon, Fryer, or Nunne: neither in Masse nor pilgrimage, nor any thing else that man can doe. And why so? Because these matters want the Word of God, yea, the Word of God forbiddeth a man to put any confidence in creatures. Furthermore, I beseech thee, how shall the conscience be certifyed of any creatures worke, that there is so much worthinesse and vertue in it, that it purgeth and wipeth away sinnes, and deserues euerlasting life, not vnto one person alone, but also to many more? Indeed the fat sed Monkes and vagabond Fryers haue very liberally sold their merits vnto folkes lying on their death-beds, but tell mee, whose conscience could be perswaded that his sinnes be forgiuen for their sakes? Nay, it was brought further in doubt, as most sorrowfull examples of these many yeeres beare record enough, and too much. What shift then shall the trembling conscience make to finde rest? There is no shift will serue but this onely one, when it shall flye vnto Christ as the sure Anker, and shall call his benefits to minde, wherefore he was made man, why he was made a ransome, and a slaine Sacrifice for all the whole world, and what was the cause that hee cancelled the hand-writing of the Law, conquered the deuill and death, and made free passage vnto euerlasting life; and shall after that consider the promises and Commandements, wherein all men are bidden to beleeue in Christ, and vndoubted forgiuenesse is promised to all sinners through Christ: at length by the helpe of the holy Ghost, whom he shall craue of God by Christ, he shall apply this merit vnto himselfe by faith, and bee fully perswaded that his sinnes are remitted and swallowed vp in the death of Christ, and that hee is in the state of grace, and made righteous for Christs sake, without any merit or worthinesse of his owne. Then the conscience shall be able to lift vp it selfe and be most certainly perswaded of the grace and fauour of God towards it, and of saluation, righteousnesse, and euerlasting life: neither shall it be afraid to looke God in the face, nor of death: and it shall haue an vndoubted hope of euerlasting goodnesse. And what is the cause thereof? Verily that matter hath the expresse and plaine Word of God to warrant it. For thus saith Christ, *Iob. 6. This is the will of him that sent me, that all that see the sonne, and beleeue in him, haue euerlasting life. Rom. 4. Therefore was the promise made through faith, that it might come of fauour, whereby the promise might be sure.* Item, *Rom. 5. Where sinne did abound, there grace was more abundant also. 1 Cor. 1. Christ is made of God vnto vs wisdome, righteousnesse, sanctification and redemption,*

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that as it is written, *He that reioyceth, should reioyce in the Lord.* The conscience may safely leane to those Texts that haue the manifest promise of God. Besides that, he in whom is safety, all trust and hope is put, is sufficient enough, so that man may not doubt in his minde, of his worthinesse, merit and power. All creatures are iudged of the conscience, and are found ouer-feeble to repulse and put to flight so great a masse of sinnes, so sore a prouoking of Gods wrath against vs, and so horrible a furour and outrage of our most mighty enemies. But forasmuch as Christ is God Almighty, and very man perfect without sinne, and seeing Gods Booke beareth record, that he was sent and giuen vnto vs, to bee a Mediatour, an Intercessor, and a Sauiour; and for confirmation of this truth, thereunto signes be added, euen the Sacraments, that Christ himselfe hath instituted, the Elements whereof incurre into our very senses; Therefore the conscience may surely attaine peace, tranquility, mirth and eternall life in this same Christ, and cast out of his heart all that breedeth either doubt or desperation. This is plenteously declared by examples both old and new, which I could reckon vp, but that it would require too long a time.

But would to God this great point were somewhat more seriously pondred of many a one, which are possessed and bewitched with wicked opinions, and glue themselues ouer to careless security, and neither iudge nor speake of these so weighty matters any otherwise, then (as the old saying is) blinde men deeme of colours. For when mens consciences shall be tossed and turmoiled in the time of anguish with the terrours of sinnes, of the wrath of God, of death and of hell, then they shall beginne (all to late) to debate of these matters, and it is danger lest they end their life in desperation and grudging against God, as it hath chanced to many men of famous estate in our dayes. Therefore this same necessity ought to moue vs, that we should thinke no Neutraltie or playing Iacke of both sides is allowed in this behalfe. For in thy last houre when thou must flit out of this life (at least if thou beleeuest that there is another life after, as many one scarce thinketh there is) wherein shall thy conscience burthen thee? Thou wast a Neuter, but now thy conscience requireth thee to be at a full certainty, wherein thou mayest take thy leaue of this world. Out of peraduenture, the Deuill will not suffer thee to be a Neuter. And when thy breath is once out of thy mouth, thou shalt not remaine a Neuter, thou shalt not hang in the middle way betwe ne heauen and earth, but either Heauen or Hell shall catch thee, and betweene these two there is no middle way left. For as touching the

doctrine

doctrine of purgatory, it is nothing else, but a very fained fantasie. And this I can assure thee of, and tell thee before hand by plaine tokens, that thou shalt not be snatched vp into Heauen. Why? Because thou beleeuedst not Christs Word. The sentence is already giuen: *He that beleeueth not, is already iudged, because he beleeueth not in the Name of the onely begotten Sonne of God, Ioh.* 3. For God pulleth no man into Heauen against his will, nor by the haire of the head, as they say. He offereth his Word, he calleth, he moueth the heart by the holy Ghost. Now if thy heart be so hard and so stony, that it will not be moued, but repineth and stubbornely wrastleth against the worke of God, he also forsaketh and damneth thee, according to this Text; *He that setteth not by me, I will also set naught by him, &c. Reu.* 2. Where wilt thou become then, when God hath turned thee out? I will tell thee, Hell that hath gaped a great while for thee with open mouth, shall catch thee vp for his owne prey.

Finally, I will speake of one notable plaine saying of Christ, which in my iudgement forbiddeth all Neutraltie. Thus saith Christ, *Hee that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad, Luke* 11. This Thunder-clap nippeth, knocketh downe, and all to clattereth Neuters. But make me not a tush at this Preacher: It is God himselfe and thy Sauiour, (I would thou knewest it) which was sent from the eternall Fathers bosome to this office, to the intent hee should declare the mysteries of God vnto vs. He (I tell thee) doth plainly establish this Commandement, that all should tye themselues vnto him, and diuorceth all from him, and pronounceth them his foes, that refuse so to doe. He will haue all to be with him, that is, he requireth the whole man to be ioyned and coupled vnto him: How? According to the Commandement that God proclaimed in the Clouds concerning this Son. *This is my well beloued Son, heare him.* He willeth all men of all Nations and all ages to receiue his Word and none other, and to acknowledge and take it both for the heauenly and only truth. All Religions, Sacraments, Doctrines, & Gods seruice that differ from him & his word, he willeth to haue discerned, hurled away and damned. For like as God is but only one, euen so is his manifest word but only one and a simple plain one, & not variable nor manifold. He also requireth, that all we be of one vnity in faith, wherwith we must needs be engrafted vnto him & none other. For he alone is ordained & appointed the Intercessor, Mediator and Sauiour of the world. By him alone (& none but him) saluation came to the world, he alone is the Lambe appointed to the slaughter, that taketh away the sins of the world. Therefore we must fasten our faith vpon this Christ,

that by him we may be made righteous, that wee may climbe vp with him vnto the heauenly Father, and to the mansions of euerlasting life, as he saith, *No man commeth vnto the Father but by me, Ioh.* 14. *Hee that beleeueth in the Sonne hath euerlasting life, Ioh.* 3. We learne the same by the Sacraments also, that it is of necessity that we be ioyned, coupled and knit to this Christ, and to none other, to the intent wee may be borne anew, and made fellow heires of eternall glory. For in Baptisme wee are washed in the bloud of Christ from our sinnes, and accounted and registred into the number of the Citizens of Heauen, Yea, we are chosen to be the Children of God.

In the Lords Supper we receiue all the whole benefit of Christ by faith, and are knit vnto Christ bodily. For wee, through Faith and the holy Ghost, eat and drinke the very Body and Bloud of Christ, that wee also may be partakers of his diuine and immortall Nature, and goe with him where he now liueth, & haue the fruition of the same life, blessednes and glory, that he hath. For this cause wee are disseuered from all creatures, and incorporated vnto Christ alone by Faith and the Sacraments; and those that counsell, teach, or doe to the contrary, cannot chuse but erre most foully, and put Christ and his Sacraments to the highest reproach that may be. As those that set Christ aside, and put their confidence in creatures, in men, or in mens workes, doe teare themselues away from Christ, as if the foote or the hand should cut themselues off from their owne body.

Thirdly Christ requireth vs to pray all after one sort with him, that hee being our only Bishop, Mediatour, and Intercessor, we may preasse boldly vnto the Throne of Grace. And for that cause he biddeth vs powre out prayers vnto God the Father onely in his Name, *Verily, verily, I say vnto you, whatsoeuer you shall aske the father in my name, he shall giue it you, Ioh.* 16. As for all other helpe-fellowes, Petitioners or helpers, he thrusteth them out by the shoulders with this one word, in that he will haue vs pray in his Name. Therefore they that seeke after other guides and spokes-men before God, to cleaue vnto in their prayer, fall from Christ, and despise the decreed Will of the Father in this Mediatour whom hee hath giuen vs. Fourthly, Christ requireth an vnity in confessing of the truth, that we both confesse him (and none other) in our Doctrine, and beleeue, out of all doubt that he onely shall be the *Emanuel*, which shall wipe away and mitigate all that the world thundreth against the godly, and at length, hauing ouercome all kinde of calamities, shall giue them euerlasting blessednesse, and the crowne of eternall glory, that neuer shall

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sade away. Finally, it is necessary for vs to be vnited vnto Christ in all our conuersation, and to haue him our companion, and helper in all that we doe. For Christ saith in plaine words, *Without me yee can doe nothing.* And indeed, nothing can be wholsome, except Christ be both the helper and the top and root of all the whole matter. The rest of this sentence of Christ, I shall expound afterward when we come to the new Neuters, or Iackes of both sides. In mine opinion therefore, it appeareth plaine enough, that Christ vtterly forbiddeth all manner of Neutraltie, and straitly chargeth all to couple themselues vnto him alone: And those that do not so, he proclaimeth to be his enemies by manifest plaine words.

God is accustomed in his Word to compare that strait bound knot that is betweene him and his Church, to the knot of marriage: and to make the feruency of loue and of the knitting together more euident, he compareth it to the hot flames of loue, that is at the first in the new married Bride and Bridegroome: and calleth the falling from his Word Whoredome, which comparison it selfe teacheth, that all manner of Neutraltie displeaseth God aboue all measure. Thus he speaketh, *Ose.* 2. *I will marry thee vnto my selfe for euermore, and I will marry thee vnto my selfe in righteousnesse and iudgement, in mercy and long suffering. And I will marry thee vnto my selfe in Faith, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.* This lesson, ouer and besides that it expresseth an exceeding great force of the loue of God towards vs wretches, and requireth mutuall loue of vs againe, it describeth also the manner of iustification, that righteousnesse commeth not of our owne powers, but of the loue and mercy of God towards vs, which we lay hold on and apply vnto our selues by Faith. And what is the cause, thinke you, that God is called a iealous God? Is it not because he would haue thee be addicted vnto him alone, and hateth them most deadly, yea, punisheth them also, which turne that loue which they ought to render vnto God another way? The Germanes haue a common saying of loue: Either loue me alone, or meddle not with me at all: **Allein mein, oder lass gar sein.** And in England we haue an old Prouerbe, Loue and Lordship loueth no fellowship. For surely, that that is true and feruent loue indeed, can abide no fellow-louer. And euen after the same sort, doubtlesse God is a iealous God, as he hath witnessed in many most earnest graue Lessons, both in the old Testament and new, and made it seene by sore slaughters in all ages. Therefore by no meanes it is free or allowed vnto any man to doubt, or bee a Neuter in the Articles of the Faith. And it is a wonder to see such presumptuous stubbornnesse in men, that they had rather forsake the Word,

and neglect their owne saluation too, and to abstaine from both parts, then to assent vnto that one, that goeth most neere vnto the truth. Surely, it cannot be chosen, but such manner of folkes are ruled by carelesse security. For if they were exercised with neuer so small a conscience for the sinnes which they had committed, necessity would doubtlesse compell them to make difference of Doctrines, & chose that, that would ease the sorrowfull troubled conscience. Therefore the matter it selfe argueth that they are the Deuills prisoners, and cannot come vnto earnest repentance.

But hearken a while, what fortresses and Bulwarkes they strengthen and defend themselues withall, and how highly they would be praised for their wisdome and (almost monstrous) modesty, with their playing the Neuters. For where other of the simple and more ignorant sort of people (as they be counted) be too quickly contented with mingle mangle Religions or doctrines, they alone will be reckoned for the more discreete, in that they be aduised to tarry till it be acknowledged and determined by ordinary power, and to hold with no side till it be debated and openly allowed by common authority. For this is their saying: It is not for me to take vp so weighty matters of contention and controuersie, & to condemn either part to mine owne harme. I see there are earnest contentions about matters of importance. There fall out among themselues, not the common vnlearned people, but men of profound knowledge in the Scriptures, and notably learned in all the tongues. Both parts seeke to ground their doctrines vpon Scriptures, I heare both parts boast themselues to be the Church. Besides that, they be men of both sides, which may erre. And moreouer, men may espy faults in both parts, and that no small, nor a few faults. And though the one part especially seeme to bee the neerer vnto the truth, yet the authority and the long continuance of that other part makes me on the other side to thinke it best for me to tarry still in a meane. These and many other reasons they gather like studious forecasting men, and many times they vtter them among their familiars in great sadnesse, and so carry such as be of the vnlearned sort with them into the gulfe of doubts.

Therefore I will answer them in order in few words. Yea forsooth, it is euen thy duty to discerne euery doctrine whatsoeuer it is, concerning saluation and the true seruing of God, what man soeuer it were that taught it, and to giue sentence, this is agreeable to the truth, that is not: this I receiue and follow, that I detest and hold accursed.

It is a most false, erronious opinion, to thinke that no man hath to doe to iudge vpon doctrines but the Pope of Rome, Bishops, and men of his

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popish leuen: For the word is as well giuen to me and to thee, and God commandeth vs as straightly to giue place vnto it, to keepe it, and to discerne mens iuglings from it, as vnto *Peter* or *Paul*, or them that say they haue the gouernance of the Church at this day. Like as wee haue all neede of saluation, euen so must euery one needs be a iudge vpon doctrines. Who were they, I pray thee, that Christ said vnto, *My sheepe heare my voyce, and follow not a stranger, but abhorre his voyce?* doth hee not bid, that the sheepe which are willing to follow their shepheard Christ should giue diligent eare to the voices of cryers, that is to say, Teachers, and discerne which is the true shepheards voice that they ought to follow, and which is the seducer or wolues voice, which they ought to hate and flee from? If thou wilt not doe thus, but sticke still in a meane, thou canst not be Christs sheepe; no, thou shalt be the wolues pray. Christ giueth this warning. *Mat. 7. Beware of false Prophets, that come to you in sheepes cloathing, and inwardly be rauening wolues.* But vnto whom giueth hee this commandement, vnto none but to the Apostles? Yea, to all the whole multitude that came vnto him to heare the word of God. Therefore, if euery one ought to beware of false teachers, surely euery one must needs iudge of their doctrines, that he be not deceiued. *Ephes. 4. Now wee are not like children wauering, to be carried about with euery winde of doctrine, by the wilinesse of men, and subtill sleight, which they lye in waite to deceiue vs withall.* Doth not *Paul* teach vs in this place, to be stedfast and constant in the truth, and abhorre all other glosed doctrines, which the deceiuers goe about to weaken our faith withall? And sure this cannot bee done without iudgement. *1 Thessa. 5. Proue all things, and hold that is good.*

It is a manifest plaine commandement, that euery one of vs should try doctrines by the truth of Gods word, as the true touchstone, and to know, reiect, and condemne all strange doctrines, and to keepe the truth safe and vncorrupt. For he biddeth thee hold that is good, that is, sound doctrine: Hee will not haue thee to vse an vnseasonable modestie in this case, as though it were not for thee to iudge vpon these matters, but either to hold that is good, or else to let it vtterly alone. *1 Iohn 4. Dearely beloued, beleeue not euery spirit, but proue the spirits, whether they be of God, for many false Prophets are gone into the world.* This saying doth not onely giue power vnto all Christians to iudge vpon euery doctrine, but also it straightly chargeth euery one to proue and examine, to disseuer falsehood from truth, and constantly to keepe the word of God.

But here doe the Neuters alwaies seeke shifts and starting holes. What

a confusion shall this be (say they) if euery one shall be suffred to giue sentence vpon controuersies of Religions? I answer. There is no cause, why any confusion should be dread at all. It shall bee necessary for all mens iudgements and sentences to agree in one, and to conclude all vnto one end. For there is but onely one rule to iudge by, and but one foundation (neither may a man decline from it so much as one haires breadth) that is, the pure word of God proclaimed by Christs owne mouth, not mingled with mens glosses: and this word is contained in the bookes of the Prophets and Apostles. For euery one is not freely suffred (as these womanly sober men are too afraid of) to iudge as it liketh himselfe, but all power of iudgement (I say) is tyed to the word of God. If any swarue from it, they are surely out of the way. All this (as I haue often said before) must bee taken, that I meane, as concerning the Articles of the faith.

After the same manner may this cold feeble excuse of theirs be wiped away: I acknowledge mine owne weaknesse in these sore hard matters of controuersie, and I my selfe might fall. And therefore I had rather be a Neuter still, than to stop so great a discord. I answer: It is true, wee are all too much, too weake, too childish, too foolish, and too blinde in such weighty matters. But the iudgement dependeth not of our abilitie, but of the word of God, which all men haue giuen them, and are put in trust withall, and is such a one that it cannot be intricate or obscure vnto any man, so that he haue any exercise in the troubles of conscience, and pray continually vnto God for helpe: as in *Iames* the first; *If any of you want wisedome, let him craue it of God, which giueth liberally vnto all, and casteth no man in the teeth, and it shall be giuen him.* Therefore thou art bound by the commandement of God to learne the word that the sonne of God hath declared, what manner a man or woman soeuer thou be. And then thou oughtest according to that word of God, which is compriſed in the Prophets and Apostles writings, to iudge vpon all Religions and all doctrines, whether thou be weake or strong, whether thou be of the Cleargie or the Laitie, whether thou be learned or vnlearned, whether thou be old or yong: For thou heareſt it said; *If any man preach any other Gospell, curſed be he.* And, *Heare him.*

And to be plaine, I thinke those mens rashnesse and shamelesse impudencie is to be disallowed and repressed, yea to be well punished, which as it were with vnwashen hands meddle with these controuersies, and not knowing the grounds of the matters, take vpon them to iudge as it liketh themselues. For seeing there is none other rule to iudge by, but this one-

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ly word of God, neceſſity requireth, that they which ſhall iudge, be not altogether ignorant in it. And it is not all one to bee weake in the Articles, and not to be able to beleeue conſtantly in them; and to acknowledge the truth, and to pronounce according to the truth, and to diſſeuer ſtrange doctrines from it. As, we beleeue all is true, that is contained in the holy ſacred Bible, but yet our faith is feeble, and hath not that perfection that it ought to haue.

But I haue not ſo great knowledge in the Bible (you will ſay) nor am of ſo quicke a iudgement, to haue all the teſtimonies of the old Teſtament and new vpon my fingers ends. I anſwer: Loe, I will ſhew thee a ſhort handſome way. Art thou a Chriſtian? Canſt thou ſay the parts of thy Catechiſme? I thinke there is no Chriſtian in all the world, that will be ſo wickedly rude, as not to know ſo few Chapters. Yes 40000 in *England.*

Now let thoſe Chapters of the Catechiſme bee vnto thee inſtead of a moſt ſure perfect rule to examine, to try, and to iudge all Religions and all doctrines by. For it is certaine, that the Catechiſme is a ſhort handſome ſumme of all the whole Bible, and containeth all that is required of neceſſitie vnto faith and vnto our ſaluation, as no Chriſtian will denie. Then, if thou perceiueſt by diligent marking and conſidering, ſetting aſide the reſpect of perſons, not regarding the gay ſhew and pretence of the doctrines, and brideling thine owne priuate affections, that it agreeth with thy Catechiſme, that is alleadged, thou maieſt freely and ſafely take it for the very truth it ſelfe: but if thou finde their doctrine or obſeruances to accord with the parts of the Catechiſme no more, than my fiſt vpon thine eie, as they ſay, but that all the allegations be vnheard, ſtrange and repugnant, how pleaſant and agreeable ſoeuer they ſeeme vnto reaſon, then thou maieſt freely and flatly pronounce, that they are meere lyes and nothing but falſe iuglings of the very Diuell himſelfe. As for example. Our aduerſaries teach, that it is in mans owne power to fulfill the Law of God in this life, and by this meanes, that is to ſay, by the deeds of the Law to deſerue righteouſneſſe and eternall life.

Now if thou wilt throughly try out that doctrine, whether it be true or not, apply and lay the parts of thy Catechiſme vnto it. If it agree there is no doubt, but it is true: and if not, then it is certainly erroneous and blaſphemous.

Now the ten Commandements ſay; *Thou ſhalt haue none other Gods. Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vaine*, and ſo forth. Therefore the Law biddeth thee doe, that thou doeſt not. For the Law doth alwayes accuſe thee, and maketh thee guilty, as the Apoſtle teacheth;

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The Law worketh wrath. And what could it doe else, seeing man is not able naturally by reason of sinne to accomplish perfect entire obedience both outwardly and inwardly to God, according to the ten Commandements. Question with thine owne heart, and it shall beare witnesse against thee. The Apostles Creed saith, that Christ alone is the ransome, and reconciled vs vnto his offended father by his onely merit, destroied euerlasting death by his death, brake the Serpents head, and set the gate vnto eternall life wide open, where hee now sitteth on the fathers right hand, teigning in like power, maiesty, and glory, and hath subdued all that is aboue heauen or beneath vnder his owne power.

Thou hearest not one iot of mention made here of mens workes: we confesse Christ onely to be the slaine Sacrifice for our sinnes.

The Lords Prayer biddeth vs pray continually; And *forgiue vs our trespasses:* Therefore thou art farre wide from fulfilling of the Law.

Baptisme teacheth cleerely, that we are washed onely of free mercy by the merit of Christ. The words of Absolution declare forgiuenesse of sinnes freely for the onely Passions sake of Christ.

And the Lords Supper doth most mightily teach the same, that onely for the body and bloud of Christ, that is, for his Passions sake, which we apply vnto our selues by faith, we are in the state of grace, and haue eternall life: Whereof a sure warrant is giuen vnto euery one in the vse of that Sacrament, euen the very body in bread, and the bloud in wine spiritually to feede vpon. Hereof it followeth most plainly; that all the parts of the Catechisme doe impugne and damne that doctrine of fulfilling of the Law, and righteousnesse of mans workes. For all the parts of it lead vs vnto Christ alone: and so doth also the Law it selfe (which nethelesse speaketh of workes) according to this; *The Law is our Schoolemaster vnto Christ, Gal.* 3. For it setteth forth the greatnesse and vglinesse of our sinnes plainly before our eyes, and biddeth vs with open mouth despaire of our selues; and couertly it driueth vs to seeke the benefit of another, that is, of Christ, by the which wee may be euerlastingly blessed.

Another example. Our aduersaries contend, that the Saints departed now liuing with God in eternall life are to be prayed vnto. See whether thy Catechisme allow that doctrine or not. The first of the ten Commandements saith thus; *Thou shalt haue none other Gods.* But to call vpon Saints departed out of this life, is to haue other Gods. For Inuocation is nothing else, then to ascribe a certaine almighty power to them that bee absent, as well in seeing the motions of the heart, and hearing of prayers,

as in power to giue helpe. But God reporteth in the declaration of the ten Commandements, *that he is a iealous God.* And *Eſay* 43. he ſaith, *Hee will not ſuffer the honour due vnto him to be attributed vnto another.* Therefore Inuocation of the Saints departed is againſt the firſt and chiefeſt Commandement of all.

The Apoſtles Creed teacheth vs to beleeue in God the Father, the Son and the holy Ghoſt, and not onely to acknowledge this our onely God as the onely fountaine of all goodneſſe, of life, liuing, remiſſion of ſinnes and ſaluation, but alſo to aske and begge of him alone all good things both of body and ſoule. Then it followeth that we haue no need of dead Saints helpe to obtaine theſe withall.

The Lords Prayer teacheth vs expreſly to direct our minde and words, not to any Saint, and to craue bodily and ghoſtly goodneſſe either of this life or of the life euerlaſting of them, but vnto this God the Father, which hath reuealed himſelfe in the Son, and accepted vs by this ſame onely begotten Sonne to be his Children.

Neither are we Baptiſed in the name of any Creature, but in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt; that is to ſay, that we ſhould acknowledge and call vpon this God, our onely helper and ſauiour. We are aſſoiled of our ſinſ onely in the name and merit of Chriſt, without mention making of any Saint, as Chriſt ſaith; *He that beleeueth in me, ſhall liue.*

Finally, in the Lords Supper, the Sacrament of the body and bloud of Chriſt is giuen vs for a teſtimonie, that Chriſt is our onely mercy ſeat, Biſhop, and King, of whom onely we may depend, who only reconcileth vs vnto the Father, for whoſe ſake onely we haue all manner of good things. Thou heareſt not that the Sacrament of the body and bloud of any manner of Saints is deliuered vs, or that they are appointed to be our Mediatours before God. Therefore theſe parts of thy Catechiſme doe all agree in one, and hiſſe out the doctrine of Inuocation of the Saints departed; and declare it moſt euidently to be moſt high blaſphemie againſt the Father, the Sonne, and the holy Ghoſt. Looke I pray thee, what iudgement or direction couldeſt thou haue more ſpeedy, and more eaſie than this is? Indeede it ſeemeth to be childiſh and rude, I confeſſe it, but yet it is true and moſt certaine. Theſe examples I rehearſe, that Neuters may be abaſhed and aſhamed in making their excuſes, if they bee not (as for the moſt part they are) paſt all ſhame.

But yet theſe Nicholas Neuters are not ſatiſfied. For they ſtand wonderfully in their owne conceits. They ſay, that there bee very profound

learned men on both parts, and both parts hold of the Scriptures; and neither part of them both hath all false, but some things are so true, that without Heresie they cannot be denied. As, the Papists doe speake rightly of the Articles of the Trinitie, they talke truly of Creation, they confesse Originall sinne, they teach touching Redemption by Christ, that he alone was obiected and appointed to dispatch sinne and the effects of sinne, and that he onely ouercame our enemies, Satan, death, and hell, and went triumphantly into heauen, and there sitteth now at the Fathers right hand, according to the Prophets sayings. These and certaine other matters the Gospellers (as they call them) acknowledge to be true, and agreeable to the word of God, and to the testimonies added vnto the word. Therefore they say, it is not meet for them to condemne either part, but rather will restraine themselues from both sides, till they agree all in some Councell, and till the truth be shewed openly abroad, as if it were digged out of a most deepe darke dungeon.

I answer. I shewed you before by certaine euident testimonies of the holy Scripture, that wee are bound and constrained by the commandement of God, to iudge vpon doctrines according to the prescribed rule and fashion, that we be not carried about with euery blustring winde of doctrines, nor haue respect to any person.

For the word of God, wherein our soules health must be sought, consisteth not in any humaine persons of how high degree soeuer they bee, but in the author of it, God, and his sonne Iesus Christ; wee are all the sheepe of one onely shepheard, Christ.

And therefore are wee bound all to acknowledge and follow his voice, and quickly to iudge, discerne, cast away, and hate other strange and euill sounding noises. Moreouer, I haue also laid this foundation before; that the word of God is onely one and a simple plaine one, and hath also one perpetuall manner of meaning, agreeable to it selfe. But for as much as the doctrine of the Papists, and the doctrine of the Gospellers (for so we call that doctrine now, which in these latter dayes of the world is through the mighty great benefit of God clensed and healed by the instrument of God *M. Luther* and others, from most filthy corruptions) doe varie the one against the other in Articles of the faith most extreamely; it standeth vs in hand to looke warily about vs, which doctrine agreeth with the one onely ground-worke and foundation, (I meane, the heauenly word of God) and which doth not. And that wee shall soone perceiue, in case we be but weakly instructed in Gods word, and referre all to the concordance and analogy of faith, as *Paul* giueth

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vs warning; howbeit we haue neede of the holy Ghoſt, which guideth vs into all truth, to be our guide vnto that matter: For where hee is not the leader, and where men take that arrogantly vpon their owne wiſedome, which pertaineth onely to the power of God, there is no end of errours, and mens eyes are daſeled as it were in a maze, that they cannot ſee the truth. And Chriſt ſaith, *Iohn 9. I came into the world vnto iudgement, that thoſe which ſee not, may ſee, and they that ſee, may bee made blinde.*

Therefore looke what truth our aduerſaries haue, that wee receiue with moſt ready minds; but where they peruert the truth of God with the dreames of men, there they muſt needs giue vs leaue to diſſent from them, as God commandeth vs. Doeſt thou not know, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles told before hand, that moſt peſtilent noyſome ſectaries ſhould come with the name of Chriſt, ſaying; *Lee, here is Chriſt, lee, there is Chriſt?* Doth not he that hath all things both paſt, preſent, and to come, plainely before his eyes, ſay that falſe Prophets cloathed not in a Wolfe nor a Beares skinne, but in ſheepes array, ſhould make hauocke of Chriſts ſheepefold? What? Doth not the choſen veſſell of God being led by the ſpirit of Chriſt tell the ſame tale? *Satan himſelfe* (ſaith hee) *is transfigured into an Angell of light.* It is no great thing then, though his Miniſters be transfigured like the Miniſters of righteouſneſſe, *whoſe end ſhall be according to their workes*, 2 *Cor.* 11.

Did not Satan put on that Angel-like viſour, when he tooke vpon him in Paradiſe to interpret the commandement of God, concerning the forbidding of the Apple, and with that viſour plucked all mankind with all mans whole poſteritie (which is an horrible hearing) with one ſleighty ſhift and with one enterpriſe, quite away from God, and ſubdued them vnder his owne tyrannie? Therefore ſuffer not thy ſelfe by fine painted words and citing of the Scripture, to be ſhifted away from the foundation. For there was neuer yet any Hereticke, but he ſaid, he brought forth holy Scripture, and ſhewed the true meaning of it, and ſought nothing ſo much as the wealth of mens ſoules. For as for thoſe that haue caſt away the bookes of holy Scriptures, either a part of them, or altogether, and haue deuiſed a certaine new and ſtrange conceit, they haue diſcouered themſelues too groſely, that they may be eaſily knowne, eſpecially in that aſſembly, that is called the Church.

But you will ſay, there are of the Papiſts very excellent men, and profoundly skilled in holy Scriptures, and their meaning is, alſo to ſet and eſtabliſh their matters out of the fountaines of the Prophets and Apoſtles.

Well, Let them be. Doeſt thou not know that the diuell (as I ſaid before) hath an Angel-like nature and wiſedome, and yet wee muſt not beleeue him for all that? Hearken what *Paul* ſpeaketh out of the Prophet; *I will deſtroy the wiſdome of the wiſe, and reproue the prudence of the prudent. Where is the wiſe man? Where is the diſputer of this world? Hath not God made the wiſedome of this world fooliſhneſſe?*

Yea, but both parts may ſwarue from the truth, and be deceiued, and gheſſe at a venture, as the blinde man caſteth his ſtaffe. Therefore perchance the truth lieth yet ſtill drowned in the deepe, as *Democritus* was wont to ſay. I anſwer. If there were no monuments left, that containe the plain minde of God concerning the Articles of the Faith, and the true ſeruing of God, perhaps this doubt might haue ſome place, but thou haſt openly before thine eyes the writings of the Prophets and Apoſtles confirmed with many notable great Miracles; and the ſonne of God himſelfe bare record vnto thoſe Sermons of the Prophets and Apoſtles. Therefore the truth lieth not locked vp nor buried in a deepe darke dungeon, but it is brought forth into the light, and ſet abroad plainly, as it were, in the noone ſunne. Then it is a moſt falſe perſwaſion to ſay that the bookes of holy Scripture are full of obſcure riddles, which cannot be expounded, or vnderſtood. God hath not rolled vp his doctrine in darkneſſe, but according to his owne wiſdome, hee hath ſet it forth, ſimply, plainly, and moſt openly, vnto all folkes, and would haue all to vnderſtand it. I pray thee, what is more ſimple and more plaine then Chriſts owne Sermons be? Hee frameth himſelfe after the capacitie of the learners, hee vſeth ſuch common and homely manner of ſpeech, as the vulgar people doe.

And though he ſpake ſome things in parables, yet they were either knowne of the godly before hand at that time, or elſe hee opened them plainly enough himſelfe. Of the ſame ſort bee the things that the Prophets and Apoſtles haue by the ſpirit of God vttred in their writings.

And it cannot be choſen, but there is a Church of God, and that a viſible Church vpon earth, according to the Article of our Creed: I beleeue that there is one holy Catholike Church. And this Church cannot erre in the principall Articles of the Faith. For if it erre in them, in cannot be the Church of God. Therefore both the truth and the very proper and true vnderſtanding of the word muſt needs be in that congregation.

Beſides this, it can none otherwiſe be, but this Church is in that people, where the doctrine of the Prophets and Apoſtles is vncorruptly taught.

For

For it is not curiouſly to bee ſought for, among the Turkes, Scythians, or Iewes, being as they be now, nor among other Nations, which for the moſt part haue no knowledge of Gods Word at all, and none they deſire to haue.

Yet it is to be thought that there be ſome members of the true Church among thoſe Nations ſcattered here and there abroad. Then it followeth: that foraſmuch as both we, and our aduerſaries, the Papiſts, doe acknowledge and receiue the Bookes of the Prophets and Apoſtles, either we are the true Church of God, or they: either we haue the onely one truth of God, or they. For in theſe matters which wee vary in, namely, in the Articles of the faith, neither can both parts be true, nor both parts falſe: according to the Principle, There is but one truth, and not manifold truths. And what can be the Church of God, if wee Goſpellers (as we are called) be not? Who ſhall haue the truth, if we haue it not? For firſt we embrace, hold, and profeſſe the Word of God purely, without the dregs of mans traditions, and wee moſt iuſtly hate thoſe things that are imagined by mans owne braine, and doe violent wrong to the Word of God, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *If any preach an other Goſpell, curſed be he.* But the Papiſts mingle and marre all with their owne Gloſes and mens inuentions, and without them their minde is to allow nothing.

We ſeeke nothing but Chriſt in the old Teſtament and new, as the only pith and ſubſtance, and him we take for our onely Reconciliator, Sauiour, Mediatour, and Biſhop. But the Papiſts extoll the dignity and merits of mens workes, and wreſt all that is contained in both the Teſtaments, to make Chriſt the beginning of iuſtification, and themſelues the finiſhers and perfect makers vp of iuſtification.

We affirme that thoſe obſeruances only be acceptable vnto God that are ſpecified in his certaine Word. But the Papiſts enforce men to thoſe obſeruances and God-ſeruice that are deuiſed by the arrogancy and raſhneſſe of man, and aſcribe more worthineſſe vnto them, then to thoſe that are commanded of God himſelfe. We abhor Idolatry. But the Papiſts are manifeſt Idolaters, in that they honour the Saints departed with the honour due to God, and call vpon them to be their Interceſſors and helpers: and lead men rather vnto the Virgin *Mary*, then to Chriſt.

We keepe the Sacraments entire and whole ſtill, according to the forme of Chriſts owne inſtitution. But the Papiſts doe wickedly mangle the Sacraments which Chriſt hath ordained, and change the forme it ſelfe. For of the receiuing of the Sacrament of our Lords Body and Bloud, they make an open offering, auaileable not onely vnto the

quicke, but alſo to the dead, that lye broyling in Purgatory, if wee would beleeue them.

We allow honeſt and lawfull wedlocke in all ſtates. But the Papiſts call it a foule ſinne (yea, worthy to be puniſhed with death) if an Eccleſiaſticall perſon be married; as though marriage were the fouleſt thing that could be, and were an hinderance to the miniſtery by all meanes. Hereby it is no hard matter to Iudge, which is the Church, and what congregation is neereſt vnto the ſincere Word of God. So wee being certified by theſe and other ſure tokens, are not afraid to pronounce plainly, that the true Church of God is among vs, wherein God worketh effectually by his Word, and regenerateth very many vnto eternall life. Contrariwiſe, we are not afraid to affirme that all obſtinate wilfull Papiſts, which ioyne not themſelues vnto this pure Doctrine, and true ſeruing of God, are barred out of this true Church. And, if there bee any weaklings, that groane being yet ſtill vnder the Popes tyrannous yoke, yet it is meete for them to beare their good will vnto this ſound Doctrine, and true ſeruing of God.

The Pope hath many markes that proue him to be the notable great Antichriſt, but euery body may eaſily perceiue them, and therefore I thinke it but loſt labour to make any further rehearſall of them in this place. They are ſo manifeſt, that euen our enemies themſelues are enforced almoſt to grant them: but yet they ſeeke other cloaked pretences. They ſay it ſeemeth not like to be true, that we are the Church, ſeeing we be but a few in number, and in no high authority, and ſprung vp but of late yeeres. Contrariwiſe, that it ſeemeth more like to bee true, that the Pope and his be the Church. For they are many moe than we: and are men of much higher authority than we, they beare the ſwinge in the gouernance of the Church, and haue had this moſt gay glorious title a long ſeaſon. And it is not to be thought that God hath left, and yet leaueth ſtill ſo goodly a company of men in errour, and that he hath hidden, or yet doth hide ſtill the truth from ſo many men, being moſt famouſly ſeene in all kinds of learning. I anſwer, This obiection doth toſſe and torment very many folkes mindes grieuouſly: Eſpecially thoſe that haue not beene as yet throughly enough skilled in the outward face of the Church continually from the beginning. Marke, I pray thee, what hath beene the face of the Church of God in all ages. Hath not the number of the wicked alwaies exceeded the number of the godly innumerably? *Caines* Church was farre more gorgeous, and of much greater number then *Seths* his Church was. The fathers wandred about from

place

place to place, without any certaine ſeat to abide in, and yet they had the Church onely in their families. The other multitude that was ſpred euery where abroad vpon the beſt places of the earth, was the moſt wicked. At the generall Floud wherein all mankinde was drowned, only *Noah* and his Wife, with his three ſonnes and their wiues, was the Church. Paſſe forth in order through all ages vnto theſe dayes, and you ſhall ſee that the Church of God was but a ſmall company, and an abiect ſort of people in reſpect of the multitude of worldlings. Therefore the Prophets did many times preach againſt that ſlander, concerning the multitude: as *Eſay* 1. *If the Lord of hoſts had not left vs ſeede, wee had beene like Sodome, and made like Gomorrah.* Alſo *Sopho.* 3. *I will leaue in the middeſt of thee a poore people and a needy, and they ſhall truſt in the Name of the Lord.* Alſo *Ioh.* 1. *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* Alſo, *He came vnto his owne, and his owne receiued him not.* Item, *Luke* 12. *Be not afraid, little flocke.* Suffer not thy ſelfe therefore to be ſo cumbred with their vaine title, onely behold the Church that was in Chriſts time. Were not the high Prieſts and Scribes of Ieruſalem and their order, in the higheſt eſtate of the Church? Were they not in opinion of learning, in wealth, and in multitude, farre aboue the ſilly wandring Chriſt and the Fiſhers, and the other inferiour people that followed Chriſt? And yet theſe moſt contemned ſilly ſoules were the Church which God delighted in, and in whom he beganne his eternall Kingdome by his Sonne. And euen now the caſe ſtandeth after *Pauls* ſaying: *Not many wiſe after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble: but God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world, to confound the wiſe, and the weake things of the world hath God choſen to confound the ſtrong; and the weake things of the world and of no reputation hath God choſen, and things that be not, to deſtroy the things that be, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his ſight,* 1 *Cor.* 1. And Chriſt ſaith, *The poore receiue the Goſpell; happy is he that is not offended in me, Mat.* 11. And therefore *Simeon* Propheſied, that this babe, whoſe preſence made him ſo glad, was put for a ſigne, to be gainſaid. And the cauſe why the greateſt and moſt regarded part of mankind are caſt away from God, is becauſe they beleeue not, that is, they receiue not by faith the mercy that is offred them in Chriſt: and the Scripture reporteth, that the Diuell is the Prince of this world, and worketh effectually in the people of vnbeliefe. As for any other ſecreter cauſe than this, it is not lawfull for vs to ſearch. Finally, the conſent of holy Scriptures, and the aſſent of all godly men beare plentifull record, that our Doctrine is no new learning.

Neither

Neither ought we to iudge which is the Church, principally by the manners of men, but by the Doctrine professed. I deny not, but there are among vs many vices, which deforme the beauty of the Church, but yet there are more enormious and hainous faults committed by the rabble of the Papists, then by the Gospellers: as (I will onely reckon vp a few things of the second Table) the despising of Father and Mother, Buggery, Rape, and vnsatiable Couetousnesse, Frauds, Lyes, Riot, Hautinesse, Cruelty, Thirsting after innocent bloud, most vniust murthers, and innumerable other.

Neither is long continuance a sure argument of the truth, especially when it is falsly alleadged. *Caines* Church is ancient enough at this day, and yet for all that, it is a wicked and a cursed Church. And it is to no purpose for a man to thinke it good for him to refraine his consent, till all dissentions be taken out of the way in some Councell to come, and till all confesse the truth together. For first the Scripture saith: *I will put enmity betweene the Serpent and the seede of the woman, Gen,* 3. This enmity shall haue no end, as long as the Sonne of God liueth and the Diuell. And the Apostle saith, *There must needes be heresies,* 1 *Cor.* 11. Christ saith, *That the spirit of lying shall raigne in the latter dayes so mightily, that the very Elect, if it were possible, should be brought into error, Mat.* 24.

Besides this, there will neuer be hope of a Councel after such a sort, that the Pope shal cleane cast away the corruption of mens traditions, and receiue the pure truth, and after that perswade all the world to embrace the same. For the Pope cannot chuse but be like himselfe, that is to say, Antichrist. Be not deceiued. For hee shall neuer bee content to let his Maiesty, power, and tyranny be brought in danger: which should surely follow, in case he should hold with the truth. For the truth would abate and destroy the kingdome of Antichrist, which the Pope vseth at this day. Thirdly, thy life shall not last so long. For, how many thinkest thou haue already taken their leaue of this world, before any such Councell as thou wishest for be kept? Doest thou dreame, that their soules flye vp and downe still among folkes, and tarry for the determination of such a Councell? Indeed they were in a shrewd euill case, if they were not at a point, and determined in their hearts what Doctrine they would dye in. For it is out of all peraduenture, *they that beleeued not in Christ, shall not haue euerlasting life, Ioh.* 3. Hereby except I bee deceiued, it is plaine enough, that Neuters are made starke mad with meere opinions, nay, that they are combred and wonderfully enthralled in the Diuells illusions, that they should not yeeld to the truth, and

come

come vnto wholsome repentance. For this is the end of Neutraltie, that a man liue careleſſe, without the feare of God, and not acknowledge his ſinnes, without faith and comfort of conſcience, without prayer, and without confeſſing of the truth. For what ſhould hee either repent him of, or pray for, or confeſſe, that is not fully at a point yet, which part is the Church, nor which part ſetteth forth the Word of God rightly. Neuters indeed, are men without God, and moſt groſſe Epicures. For in the Word of God, which the Church hath and followeth, God is onely acknowledged and ſerued. For in as much as they couple not themſelues to that congregation, and hatch vp doubtfull opinions, it is not poſſible for them either to haue or ſerue God. And let not thoſe wiſe diſcreet ſober men thinke, that if they dye in that errour, they ſhall haue any excuſe before God. For the Iudgements of God are certainly ſetled: he that beleeueth not, is already iudged. And he that will not confeſſe me before men, him will not I confeſſe before my father which is in Heauen.

Hitherto now let that I haue ſaid, be ſpoken touching the groſſe plaine Neuters, whom I am content to name the old Neuters: and yet very many ſuch as theſe ſpring vp in theſe our dayes, when controuerſies of Religion are moued. And now will I alſo, by the helpe of God, ſpeake ſomewhat concerning the new and the more fine Neuters, or Iacks of both ſides rather. They are almoſt cleane contrary to theſe other before, that is, they will after a faſhion be in familiar friendſhip with both parts, and giue (as it were) the one hand to the Goſpellers, and the other to the Papiſts. For there are new toyes deuiſed and trimmed vp euery day more and more.

But I haue beene ſomewhat too long in the firſt part. For many of theſe matters may be referred alſo vnto this ſecond part.

The end of the firſt part.

H THE

THE SECOND PART OF this Booke.

NOw because I will not combet the Reader with long circumstances, there is another question, whether a man may lawfully play lacke of both sides, after such sort that he may somewhat take the Papists part, so as hee may seeme to bee the neerer vnto them, and to beare a better heart to them then to the other, and by that meanes please them: and yet for all that, incline so to the Gospellers, as he seeme not altogether gone nor parted away from them, and by this shift seeke as it were a meane, to haue both parts his friends still, and to be esteemed among the Gospellers no Apostata, and on the other side, no wilfull person nor rebell: and all to this one end, to get fauour at those mens hands which haue chiefe authority in things, or of them that may doe a man harme, and so to keepe our selues and ours in sure safegard still.

Vnto this Neutralitie, and playing lacke of both sides, there is no small occasion ministred by those that halt and wauer too much in the sincere Doctrine of the Gospell, which are scarce the bredth of my naile from Apostasie. They take paines (God knowes) to frame goodly gay concords of Religions many wayes, and dissuade people from the simple plaine confessing of the truth for feare of persecution, and for worldy commodities sake. But especially there are a certaine sort of pragmatike men, and busie medlers, that take vpon them the oversight and compassing of many matters, which forgetting their owne vocations, set one foot in the Court, and the other in the Church, and according to their worldly mother wit they will temper, writhe, and euen limit the Law of God as it liketh themselues, and as they thinke it fit for the world, either to augment, or at least to keepe safe their temporall substance,

substance. And this is counted a singular and a necessary wisdome to auoid the greatest dammage & shame that might befall. For the pretence and outward appearance at a blush, is wondrous goodly and pleasing, as I shall declare afterward. The answer is briefe, plaine, and easie: It is not lawfull for a man to play Iack of both sides after that fashion. For if the contention were about any matter of small importance, that is to say, about apparell that were not altogether scandalous, or any Ceremony alone that were not onely blasphemous, then agreement might be easily had, euery body perceiueth it well enough: and it made no great matter though a man applyed himselfe to both parts for a time. For the conscience could catch no harme thereby. But the principall matter of this controuersie is in the Articles of the Faith, and in the chiefe points touching the seruice of God, wherein the conscience must needes bee at a sure stay, and no wauering may in any wise be admitted in this behalfe. And the cause why, is, that God, by his onely Sonne, hath openly proclaimed his plaine sentence from Heauen, and the same hee will haue to stand in full strength and vertue without altering for euermore, and straitly chargeth all people to giue audience and credence vnto that Word, and to none other: and to hurle away and condemne all that disagreeth from it. For thus doth God beginne his ten Commandements, *Thou shalt haue none other gods.* And he nameth himselfe a strong iealous God, for he requireth vs to hold vs wholly to him, and threatneth dreadful paines against them that neglect him which is the true God indeed, & betake themselues vnto other gods, or receiue any other word that is contrary to this one onely Word. The Father of Heauen himselfe, in that wonderfull Proclamation that was made in the Mount, saith with plaine words, *This is my Sonne in whom I delight, heare him.* And this saying pertaineth vnto all men of all ages. For it bindeth all people by expresse words vnto the Doctrine of this one onely Arch-shepherd: and chargeth that no audience bee giuen to other that teach contrary: and therewithall he damneth all them that vse familiar daliance with the enemies of the Gospell. For so they become disobedient vnto this Proclamation. It was not in the liberty of the Apostles, or other that sought the true knowledge of God and the saluation of their owne soules, to beare fire in the one hand and water in the other (as they say) nor to dally with Parisies, the enemies of the heauenly Doctrine, but they must need follow Christ alone, and none but him. And therefore hee calleth his Apostles with this kinde of speech, *Follow me.* Also when hee setteth forth the forme of the whole Religion of Christ, hee saith in a few short

words: *If any will follow me, let him take vp his crosse and follow me*, *Mar.* 8. Item, *If you abide in my Word, ye shall be my Disciples indeed, and yee shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*, *Ioh.* 8. Item, *If any man loue me, he will kéepe my Word, and my Father shall loue him, and we shall come vnto him, and make a dwelling place with him. Hee that loueth not mee, keepeth not my sayings*, *Ioh.* 14. Item, *Iohn* Baptist did with his mouth, with his finger, and with all his actions shew onely Christ, and none but him, saying, *Behold the Lambe of GOD, that taketh away the sinnes of the World*, *Iohn* 1. Item, *If any preach another Gospell, cursed bee hee*, *Galatians* 1. And the sayings of the Prophets agree to the same, as, *Deut.* 28. *Thou shalt not decline from the Commandements of God, neither on the right hand, nor on the left. But I haue spoken of that before.*

Hereby now it euidently appeareth, that we are all bound to one part alone, that is, to that part wherein the Word of Christ is purely preached, the Sacraments entirely ministred, and the true seruice of God highly aduanced.

Secondarily, there be two speciall contradictions, two deadly foes, and vnreconcilable: *Belial* or the Diuell, and *Christ*: light and darkenesse: the true Church and the false: the tyranny of Antichrist, and the Kingdome of the Sonne of God. For it was told before hand in very Paradise, that there should be enmity betweene the Serpent and the Seede of the woman. And *Iohn* saith, *The Sonne of God hath appeared to destroy the workes the Diuell*, 1 *Ioh.* 3. And this is manifest also, that Antichrist doth all that hee can against Christ, with all the veines hee hath in his body. For all that kingdome is the seat and power of the Deuill himselfe, most directly against the Kingdome of Christ, as it is by the goodnesse of God more cleare at this present, than the Sunne light at noone dayes. The Pope doth most apparantly blur, yea, rather defile and scrape away the honour and glory of Christ, in that he braggeth (like the Deuill) that man is able to accomplish the obedience of the Law. What good did Christ then? *He dyed in vaine* (saith *Paul*) *if righteousnesse come by the deeds of the Law*, *Gal.* 2. And in that he attributeth not Iustification whole and absolutely perfect vnto Christ, but the beginning of Iustification onely. For his doctrine is, that man is first accepted freely by the onely merit of Christ. And then that he hath qualities powred into him, which afterward increase and be augmented, and enlarged after such sort, that they fulfill the begunne Iustification, and bring it vnto perfection. By this meanes there is no small glory nipped away from the Sonne of God.

Also

Also, hee biddeth men goe to Saints now liuing with God, and cry to them to be their intercessours and helpers, contrary to this commandement and promise: *What soeuer ye shall aske the Father in my name, hee shall giue it you, Iob. 16.*

Againe, in this behalfe, Christ hath notable iniurie, in that hee is not taken nor called vpon alone, for the onely Bishop, Mediator, and Intercessour. The Sacraments that Christ instituted are most cruelly mangled and torne, and altogether transformed into another vse. Besides this, there be other Sacraments deuised without the word of God, which are exalted so high, that they are either made check-mate with Christs Sacraments, or else set aboue them.

As for example. The lay people are contrary to the most manifest institution of Christ, forbidden the vse of the Sacrament of Christs blood: and they be proclaimed Hereticks all the world ouer, that thinke or doe to the contrary. So Vnction, or Annointing is counted for one of the Sacraments, and hath monstrous vertues fained to be annexed vnto it, to the vtter reproach of the rest of the Sacraments.

Christ is also pulled downe out of the throne of his Maiesty, seeing the Pope maketh himselfe the foundation and head of the Church, and taketh vpon him a wonderfull free power in changing of doctrines and putting in new, in forging of new articles of faith, and heaping of traditions: and all to this onely end, that the Kingdome of Christ might perish, and the Kingdome of Antichrist be confirmed and enlarged. I will in this place make no rehearsall, with what craft, with what studious trauaile, and with what incredible power, Antichrist assaulteth the sonne of God, lest any man should bee offended with ouer-long declaration thereof.

Furthermore, thou canst neuer looke to make peace betweene these enemies by any possible meanes. Then whereto seekest thou so narrow shifts to agree them, either throughly, or in part, that is, either in doctrine and ceremonies altogether, or in ceremonies alone? Christ saith, *No man can serue two Masters at once, the one he shall loue, and the other he shall hate, Mat. 6.* And it is manifest, that the Pope is Antichrist; for he hath these notable markes to be knowne by: he corrupteth the sound doctrine of God most shamefully, he defileth the Sacraments most horribly, his Ceremonies for the most part are blasphemous and superstitious, he causeth wedlocke to be defiled detestably, he persecuteth innocent men, that cleaue vnto Gods truth, most mercilesly. The Pope is Antichrist.

Contrariwise, this is not vnknowne now also through the goodnesse

of God, that we Gospellers haue the sound and vncorrupt doctrine, the proper and wholesome vse of the Sacraments, and ceremonies according to the rule seruing vnto order, comelinesse, and edification, as our enemies themselues haue very oftentimes confessed, and are constrained (though it be against their wils) to confesse yet still. It is not possible therefore to make any concord, except one part giue ouer their opinion, and humbly agree to the truer Iudgement, which the other part is of. For euery one ought to embrace the truth, and to hate and detest lies vtterly. An honest man cannot in temporall matters fauour both lies and the truth at once: How much lesse may he doe it in this cause, wherein the glory of God and the saluation of our soules is in hazard. *Elias*, when the people of *Israel* were in doubt, what religion it were best for them to take vnto, *Baals* religion, or that which *Elias* set forth by the commandement of God, said vnto them with a singular stomacke; *How long halt you on both sides? If the Lord be God, follow him; And if Baal be, then follow him.* Heare also what *Paul* speaketh concerning this present cause, and agreeably with the Prophets owne words, 2 *Cor.* 6. *Leade not* (saith he) *the yoke with the vnfaithfull; For what part hath right with vnright? Or what fellowship hath light with darknesse? What agreement is betweene Christ and Belial? What part hath the faithfull with the vnfaithfull: Or what hath the Temple of God to doe with Images? For you are the temple of the liuing God*, as God saith: *I dwell with them, and walke among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people; Therefore get you out and depart from among them, saith the Lord. Touch no vncleane thing, and I shall receiue you, and I will be your father, and you shall be my sonnes and daughters, saith the Lord Omnipotent.*

Here open thine eares. Thou hearest no factious fellow, nor any new vpstart, or seditious teacher preach this doctrine, but the chosen vessell of God, the Apostle of Christ speaketh it. He with most manifest plain words chargeth vs, that we keepe no company with the enemies of the Gospell. He saith also, that it is not possible for any creature, how witty or how craftie soeuer he be, to deuise agreement betweene truth and falshood, Christ and Antichrist, right and vnright. Thirdly, hee sheweth a most weighty reason why; *You are the Temples of God: Ergo*, Yee cannot bee the temples of the Diuell also: as those doe now a daies, which goe about to gratifie both the Gospellers, and the Papists. Fourthly, hee expresseth the rewards, which ought to follow the acknowledging of the true God and his word, that is giuen vs from heauen; that is, that God himselfe will dwell in this company, and giue them goods both in this world and

Why the Church is called the wife of Christ.

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in the world to come for euer. Furthermore, thinkest thou it is without aduised cause, that the Church is called the Wife of Christ alone? And a wife cannot hold her to two husbands, or moe; and if she doe, she breaketh her fidelitie, and iustly incurreth the punishment thereof. But wee are all the espoused wife of Christ, which are of the same Church, that is to say, which haue acknowledged the word of truth and confesse it: *ergo*, it is not lawfull for vs to couple our selues vnto moe husbands, than this one. Consider also I pray you, Are not the Turkes and we enemies, one against the other? Then if any man would beare fauour both to the Turkes and to our side after a like sort, and stoutly aide both parts, should we not say, that he not onely went about a matter not possible, but also rightly accuse him for a traitor, and iudge him most worthy to be punished, as *Metius Suffetius* was? What an honest and gainfull matter then thinke you it were, to serue both God and the Diuell? To be indifferent to the truth and falshood? and to fauour the Papists and Gospellers all alike? O what grieuous paines shall such traitors of Gods truth suffer one day, not the punishment of *Metius*, but the paines of *Iudas Iscariot*? Would to God they could repent, and pray for pardon at length. But peraduenture this so lamentable a lightnesse of minde, is a punishment due for contemning the Gospell, and no small token that the end of the world is comming neere at hand. For so Prophesied the sonne of God himselfe: *When the sonne of man commeth, thinke you, that hee shall finde faith vpon earth, Luk.* 18.

Thirdly, Christ saith; *Let your communication be yea, yea, and nay nay: For what is more then this, commeth of euill.* In which saying, hee doth not onely forbid vnlawfull oathes, but also variableness and vnconstancie, both in our sayings and doings.

That we should not play whip Iacke and turne thee, when wee are among Papists, or enemies of the truth flattering them, and allowing many of their trinkets, which neuertheless doe very sore blemish the truth. Contrariwise, when we haue to doe with the Gospellers, to hold with them also, and so change as the time serueth like Camelions.

But that we should agree to the truth, say plainly and constantly, what we thinke, and not to dally with double-faced and captious reasons. It is an old saying, Truth speaketh plainly. The Histories praise the deedes of *M. Pompilius*, and so they may well. He, when he was sent Ambassador to *Alexandria* with certaine others, to command *Antiochus* in the Romans name, to breake vp the siege from the City, found *Antiochus* by chance standing vpon the shore. And when hee had declared vnto him *Pompilius.*

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such matters as he had in commandement, *Antiochus* shaped him an answer like a shipmans hose, and referred all to his friends counsaile. Then *Pompilius* being grieued at his captious and ambiguous answer, because he thought some craftie pranke would be plaied at his returne, sodainly made a circle with his staffe round about *Antiochus* in the sand, where he stood, and said; It is the Senate and People of *Romes* pleasure, that thou tell me plainly what thou wilt doe, before thou goe out of this circle. The man was afraid at these words, and said, hee would depart out of hand. Then if an heathen man thought scorne at a doubtfull and fraudulent answer, and made that sleighty sir *Antiochus* perforce to tell what lay in his heart: how much more ought we in a cause of much weightier importance to hate and detest them, that of set purpose frame their words and answers so doubtfully, so as they may be taken whither way a man will? Would to God there were some *Pompilius*, that would compell these *Antiochusses* to say as they thinke, and then surely there would be the lesse danger.

Fourthly, God requireth sound doctrine, and the true serving of God, as he himselfe hath set them out vnto mankinde, to be plainly confessed of all without difference, both of man and woman, of what estate soeuer they be, and doth earnestly reprehend them that are silent or deny them, as he saith in the third Commandement; *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vaine.* For he commandeth among other things, that Gods truth be preached and confessed, and forbiddeth euery one to bewray or set out Gods religion to hire vnto the aduersaries; I meane, so as hee grant either too much vnto them, or winke at matters of most weightie importance, that he confuteth not blasphemies; or behaue himselfe after such sort, as the aduersaries can none otherwise iudge, but that their corrupt proceeding and superstitious God seruice are allowed by him for the most part. Yea, Christ goeth roundly to worke in requiring the truth to be confessed, where he saith, *Mat.* 10. *Euery one that shall confesse me before men, him shall I also confesse before my father which is in heauen. And he that shall denie me before men, him will I also denie before my father which is in heauen.*

Thinkest thou it may be called a confessing, when thou communicatest with the enemies of the Gospell, when thy drift is to make counterfeit concordances, and when thou wilt doe in some things as they doe, at least in outward appearance, and all for feare lest thou be combred with hornets, and that thou maiest liue at thine owne ease? For after that the truth is plainly and simply confessed, there followeth by and by the

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crosse of persecution, hatred of the contrary part, and danger both of life and goods. O wretched and feeble kinde of confessing. Yet for all this, we heare men many times cracke and pray on this wise, wee will not shrinke any haire breadth from the truth that we haue acknowledged, we will stand as fast as wals of brasse in this Gospell, which wee haue learned these three or foure yeeres agoe, and knowne to be true, and haue had experience of it: we will not be afraid of any threatnings, there shall no punishment nor cruell handling make vs afraid.

Alas wagging reed, how shouldest thou stand, how shouldest thou confesse the Gospell, when thou doest not onely shrinke in the hams, but also fallest flat to the ground before any storme of trouble arise and blow vpon thee? For thou goest busily about to doe as Antichrist doth, euen in trifling matters, before it be required by name at thy hands, and all is good enough, so thou may fill thy paunch, lye in a soft bed, and sleepe in a whole skin. What wouldest thou doe, if the hangman were euen now ready at thy backe to strike off thy head, except thou wouldest receiue all Antichrists religion? Indeed this thy shrinking, and thy relenting and going at the first dash to the Papists part, purport plainly enough what thou wouldest doe. But yet I would haue thee so marke the fearefull threatning that is expressly added, lest thou dreame now in this careles security, which thou art oppressed and blinded withall, that thou shalt escape vnpunished for euer. Albeit the punishment seeme to be a great while deferred in this world, yet Christ threatneth, that hee will be reuenged on them that denie him either manifestly or after a craftie fashion, in his iudgement after the end of the world, whither he shall iudge all mankinde, and will speake thus vnto them: Likewise you note, he saith, *Luk. 9. Whosoeuer is ashamed of me and my sayings, of him shall also be ashamed the Sonne of man, when he commeth in his Maiestie, and in the Maiestie of his father, and of his holy Angels.* These words are not vaine and of none effect, but the deeds shall proue them true. Likewise, *Matth. 5.* Christ requireth a plaine confession of the Gospell, where he saith: *You are the light of the world.* A Citie cannot be hidden that is set vpon a hill, neither doe they kindle a candle, and thrust it vnder a bushell, but set it vpon a candlestick, that it may giue light to all that be in the house. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good workes, and glorifie your Father which is in heauen.*

I pray thee, what kinde of confessing is that, when it is necessary for vs all to stand in doubt vnto whether part a man must beare the more fauour, and what religion a man must bee the more bent vnto? For

thou loueſt the Popiſh faſhion, and makeſt thy ſelfe buſie to vſe it: And on the other ſide, thou holdeſt with the ſorme that the Goſpellers vſe, after a faſhion.

Is this to ſhine, and to profit other with thy light? Nay, it is rather to put out the light, if there were any, and to caſt a miſt ouer mens eyes, leſt the way of truth might be knowne. If thou wouldeſt profeſſe the truth plainly without diſſembling, thou ſhouldeſt doubtleſſe ſtirre vp very many with thine example, and make them more hearty to abide conſtant. By this reaſon alſo thou ſhouldeſt make the very enemies to beleeue, that the doctrine, which thou haſt learned, is ſuch a manner of doctrine, that thou art ready to ſpend thy life for it, if neede ſo required. Indeed this were to ſet the light of faith, which is kindled in thy heart, vpon an open high place, that ſuch as walke in moſt thicke darkneſſe might thereof, as it were of a moſt bright burning lampe, receiue light, and kindle ſome little ſparkes at thy candle, that they alſo might enter the true way, and confeſſe the truth alſo themſelues with thee. Concerning *Pauls* vocation, thus the Scripture ſpeaketh; *This is my choſen inſtrument, to beare my name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Iſrael.* Although *Pauls* own vocation be herein ſpecially deſcribed, yet as touching confeſſion of the Goſpell, it is a generall ſaying, and pertaineth to all ſorts of people; That euery one according to his calling and power ſhould profeſſe the name of Chriſt before all men, and helpe to ſet it abroad alſo. *Paul* ſaith, *Rom. 1. I am not aſhamed of the Goſpell, for it is the power of God vnto ſaluation vnto all that beleeue.* Herein is compriſed a moſt weightie reaſon, and belonging to all ſortes: and righteouſneſſe is giuen of God through the word vnto all that receiue it by faith: *Ergo*, Let no man be aſhamed of this word, but let him confeſſe it manfully. Tell me, are not they aſhamed of the Goſpell, that almoſt abhorre the name of him, by whom God hath reſtored the light of the Goſpell, and allow either in part or in the whole the Popiſh religion, which a little before they wonderfully deteſted, and begin by little and little to kiſſe the Monſter of *Romes* feet? And if a white, except God ſay nay, they will receiue that Monſtrous beaſt wholly home againe? Hereunto appertaineth the ſaying, *Apoc. 3. Thou art neither cold nor hot, would to God thou were either cold or hot.* In which ſaying euen this wicked wauering is reproued.

A tale of an Hermite.

There is a tale of a certaine Hermite and his gueſt. The Hermite as he walked forth of his Hermitage in the ſharpe of winter, met with a man by chance, that wandred in the froſt and ſnow, and was almoſt dead with

cold. So the Hermite being moued with pitie, bringeth the man home to his hermitage, to refresh himselfe at the fire. There, the cold fellow blew vpon his hands now and then; and when the Hermite saw it, hee asked him why he blew on his hands: I blow warme breath vpon my hands (quoth he) to warme me withall. Well, the Hermite maketh him sit downe at the table with him, and hot meate was set on the boord. The guest before he put a morsell in his mouth, alwaies blew on it. The Hermite questioneth with him againe somewhat more plainly, why he blew on his meat: I blow colder breath (quoth he) to coole my meat, for it is too hot. Then the Hermite being sodainly wrath, said, he could abide no such guest in his company, nor take him for his friend, that could breath both hot and cold out of one onely mouth, and so hee thrust him out of his house.

It is a merrie tale, wherein wittie men haue signified, that it is not the part of an honest or a godly man, to hatch vp ambiguous, halking, or doublefaced reasons in ciuill matters, specially not in Gods cause. And men haue bin thought worthy neither to bee loued nor to liue in the world, that could turne themselues into sundrie fashions, like *Proteus*, and sometime praise the truth, sometime dissemble it, and hold with vntruth, as the time serued.

Fiftly, take heed now, Christ saith, *Luk.* 11. *He that is not with mee, is against me: And he that gathereth not with mee, scattereth abroad.* In these words, not onely the playing *Iacke of both sides*, which we now reason of, is reproued, but also they are pronounced for pernicious enemies to the whole Church of Christ, that set their minde to halt on both sides after this manner, to the intent they would be in fauour both with the Papists, the enemies of the Gospell, and with the Gospellers too, all alike. Two things Christ requireth: First, *that all be with him*: Secondly, *that all gather with him*. First, he giueth thee not libertie to linke thy selfe with his enemies the Papists, but will haue vs all as it were bond-men to him alone. And indeed it is of necessitie that wee be wholly coupled to him, to lay hold on God the father in him, as the image of God, by him being the onely begotten sonne, and fulfilling the entire obedience of the Law perfectly, to be made the chosen children of God, to be garnished with his righteousnesse, that hee obtained on the crosse, by his helpe to be deliuered from the Diuell, Death, and Hell, by him to be raised againe, and carried vp to heauen; and to be briefe, by him to honour and serue God truly both here and in the world to come: For without him there is no saluation, nor life; without him there is no seruice that pleaseth God, as

he himselfe saith; *I am the way, the truth, and the life.* Also, *without mee, yee can doe nothing, Iob. 15.* And *Paul. Col. 1.* saith, *In him it pleased the Father, that all fulnesse shall dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to himselfe, and by him to pacifie through the bloud of his crosse, as well the things that are on earth, as the things that are in heauen.* Those therefore that incline vnto them, which corrupt the word of Christ with wicked opinions, mangle and teare the Sacraments, and deuise strange vses vnto them, and see forth more Mediatours and Sauiours, then Christ alone with his passion onely, and bid folkes pray not onely in the name of this Christ, but also in the name of *Mary, Peter,* or *Christopher,* and set more by the obseruances that are deuised by men, than them which God himselfe hath commanded, and arrogantly ascribe the merit of Iustification vnto them, it is manifest, that they abide not with Christ, but are vndoubtedly fallen away, and become Apostataes. Heare therefore what Iudgement Christ giueth; *Hee is against mee,* saith hee, *who is not with mee.* And that euen the very proofe it selfe doth teach vs euidently enough. For these haltors on both sides fall first as it were headlong into epicurean opinions, and so they begin to passe little for any manner of religion; and then they waxe so presumptuously bold, that they thinke it no danger for them, to dally euen with Christ himselfe at their owne pleasure: They perswade themselues, that Christ shall not know, or not punish their double-faced doubtings and craftie meanings, wherewith their purpose is to prouide more for the body, and liuing in this world, than for the glory of Christ, and for their owne soules.

Moreouer, they cause the true doctrine of the Gospell and true seruing of God to be openly suspected. For when they subscribe to some of the enemies proceedings, and in some points follow the forme of the aduersaries, and promise them largely; then godly folkes faith falleth sicke, yea they are made so much weaker and weaker, that they begin also to stand in doubt of all the religion that they had, they haue lesse deuotion to heare & learn the word of truth, & are more slack in seruing of God.

Then the vnlearned and common sort, which indeed is the greatest part of the people, seeketh what occasion so euer is giuen, to bee in fauour with the superiours, they are glad though vnbidden to fall into their opinions, they shrinke mannerly, as they see the superiours shrinke, and to their vttermost power, they helpe forward and make their shrinking to be more then it would be. Then they that seeme to be of a most constant iudgement and are afraid lest the truth and Church of God should catch

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any harme, grow straight waies into hatred with high and low. And as for the best and most faithfull men, that are thought of a godly zeale to resist these craftie prankes neuer so little, there are such craftie shifts found, that they bee put besides their ministeries and depriued of their Liuings.

Furthermore, the enemies, vnto whom they apply themselues, are confirmed in their errors, superstitions and blasphemies, and by that meanes many are hindred among them, that they cannot acknowledge their errour, and turne vnto repentance. Euery one thinketh straight way, that the quailing of the Gospellers is a notable argument, that theirs is a false and a forged doctrine, which is now come almost to an ouerthrow. Contrariwise, that the Papists doctrine is a most true doctrine, whereunto they that haue hitherto renounced it, shall come to it by little and little againe. They are incouraged also thereby, not to distrust their attempts, but to hope, that they shall hereafter by fraud and violence a great deale more easily bring to passe that which they could not compasse before, being letted a long season, and afraid by reason of the light of the truth, and constant standing to it.

What? Is not this to beare an enuious heart against Christ, and to inuade and impeach his Kingdome with all possible policies, through this blinde madnesse, and to betray and hire out all the Religion of Christ vnto the enemies? *Iudas* with a goodly and courteous salutation, euen Good Master, and with a kisse likewise betrayed Christ. And so these halters of both sides, they giue Christ a kisse, but they will haue money first of the enemies, which are quickly at their backe, and binde Christ, or couer Christs face, and smite him on the cheeke, and bid him reade, who stroke him.

The other part of Christs sentence is, *Hee that gathereth not with me.* In these words Christ requireth not onely, that wee be coupled to him secretly in our hearts, but also with such a firme manner of knot as laboureth in gathering the true Chuch together: that is, that wee confesse him openly, whereby others may be brought also to the true knowledge of the Sonne of God, and vnto wholsome repentance. And they that doe not so, but mutter sound Doctrine secretly, as it were in a deepe darke den, and when they are with the Papists cloke it maruellously, of them saith Christ, *They scatter abroad.* And indeed they scatter cruelly abroad; for they minister matter vnto diuers diuisions, they cause men to be of contrary mindes one to another, and open, as it were, a Window vnto the Papists to rage against the flocke of Christ the more boldly, the more

freely, and the more cruelly: as experience declareth enough, and too much. And yet for all this, wee be stricken with such a madnesse, and so horribly giuen ouer vnto a lewd minde: (alas therefore) that no man seeth these things as he may euen feele with his hands.

I would haue thee therefore to print, and if it were possible, graue this saying of Christ most deeply in thy heart, *He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* And beseech thou God, to open thine eyes a little, and lighten thine vnderstanding, that thou maist acknowledge thy selfe that Christ condemneth thee for his enemy, if thou goe on still, and play Iacke of both sides after this fashion. What can be called a greater sinne than this?

Peraduenture this sinne sleepeth now for a time, but it will awake at length, and waxe lauy. And I would to God this might be done in this world, where mens consciences might receiue comfort againe, that they be not constrained at the day of doome to heare the fearefull sentence of the angry Iudge.

Sixtly, Weigh the matter it selfe I beseech thee. Doest thou not trauell about a matter impossible? What shift canneſt thou make to bee in friendship with both sides, and offend neither part, and yet doe nothing against thy conscience?

Christ being nothing acquainted with this artificiall feat, saith, *No man can serue two Masters.* And *Paul* saith, *If I went about to please men, I could not be the seruant of Christ, Gal.* 1. If thou goe about it then, thou shalt be faine perforce to doe very many things contrary to thy Confession and conscience.

Thou must needes be somtimes present at their popish God-seruice, as at Masse, where thy Christ is after a new fashion spit vpon, scourged, and crucified afresh, and innumerable blasphemies are spewed out besides. Thou shalt oftentimes subscribe vnto such proceedings as they deuise against godly men, contrary to thy conscience. Thou shalt bee constrained to helpe forward persecution against the godly, either priuily or apertly, thou canneſt not auoid thy hands of most cruell Blasphemies.

What? Shalt thou not by this meanes not onely forsake the poore Gospellers, as much as in thee lyeth, but also cruelly oppresse and murther them? Alas good man, how can thy conscience bee quiet in this case, if thou referre it vnto God that searcheth the secrets of the conscience? Faine, pretend, and excuse what thou wilt, yet it cannot bee denyed, but thou hast hurled away the greatest part of true Religion, and

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haſt holden out thy forhead to receiue the Beaſts marke: which turneth to the vndoing both of thy ſelfe and of the true Church. Neither ſhalt thou deliuer thy conſcience before God, although afterward thou promiſe the Goſpellers neuer ſo faire, though thou be neuer ſo angry with the Papiſts, and curſeſt them neuer ſo deepely. God ſeeth this hypocriſie of thine, and hateth it. For as I haue often ſaid before, God requireth a plaine, vpright, and conſtant confeſſing of the truth. Finally, this playing Iacke of both ſides cannot continue, nor be kept cloſe long. Neceſſity ſhall driue thee at length to breake out and tell, whether part thou holdeſt withall: and then thy counterfeiting, then thy ſleighty ſhifts, and thine hypocriticall heart ſhall appeare, and no man ſhall thenceforth giue any credence vnto thee, and yet doe thee no iniury.

Seuenthly, marke what euill ſucceſſe, and what a naughty end ſuch playing Iacke of both ſides hath, when a man would faine pleaſe both parts. I will rehearſe thee an example or two, wherein thou mayſt behold, as in a glaſſe, both the vgly filthineſſe of this practiſe, and the moſt vngracious end of it. One of the twelue Apoſtles whom Chriſt aſſembled together, to the intent that being inſtructed with his heauenly Doctrine, and confirmed with myracles, they ſhould be moſt excellent witneſſes throughout all the wide world of Chriſt the Meſſias, and of the Doctrine of ſaluation: I meane *Iudas*, whoſe ſirname was *Iſcariot*: Hee aſſaid to be a Iacke of both ſides, and to bee familiar with both parts, both with Chriſt, and with the Biſhops of Ieruſalem. When hee was in Chriſts company, he communed mannerly with him, and with the reſt of his fellowes and brethren. And when he came to the chiefe Prieſts, he ſpake them faire alſo, and gaue counſell how Chriſt ſhould be taken, and by what preteuce put to death. The matter for two or three dayes lay hidden and was not knowne, albeit nothing could bee hidden from Chriſt. In the meane time *Iudas* contented himſelfe wonderfully much for inuenting ſuch a ſhift, as he thought he might pleaſe both parts gayly withall. But marke what came of it; this playing Iacke of both ſides and leaning to both parts, could not long bee kept couert. For hee had promiſed the Iewes that hee would ſhew them Chriſt in the night. So when the appointed hower came, he was demanded to goe before them, and lead the Garriſon, where Chriſt ſhould bee ſnatched vp to be guiltleſſy put to death; what needs many words? Becauſe hee would not be counted a falſe fellow, nor bee put to any notable reproach of that part which he fauoured, and was at that time the more adread of, hee was compelled in this caſe openly to fall from that other part, and com-

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pany himselfe with Christs enemies. But marke how shameleſſe he was: Hee commeth with the rout of harneſſed men, as though he had beene Christs aſſured friend ſtill, and ſaluteth him, with *Haile, Maſter*, and giueth him a kiſſe. While this was a doing, the enemies thronged in by heapes, and laid hands and cords vpon Christ. But Christ ſtraight way called him Traytor. *Iuda* (ſaith he) *Doeſt thou betray the Sonne of man with a kiſſe?* Shortly after, euen the ſelfe ſame night, and the day following, this cruell deed began by little and little to awake in the vngracious fellowes heart, and waxed ſo big, that he thought God, and all that euer God made, was angry with him: and ſo he brought the bloud price againe, and hanged himſelfe with his owne hands, and burſt in the middeſt, ſo as all the guts in his belly guſhed out.

This *Iudas* therefore is an Image, and a Glaſſe for all Iacks of both ſides to learne by, what grieuous ſinne they doe, and what a fearefull Iudgement God hath in ſtore for them, except they repent the ſooner.

Yet I will ſpeake of one excellent Apoſtle, which aſſaid to play Iack of both ſides after like faſhion: euen *Peter*, that worthy wight, which promiſed ſtoutly, that he would take ſuch part as Christ did, though it ſhould coſt him his life for it.

But it was not long before he changed his purpoſe a great deale. For when he was come into the Iudgement Hall, with purpoſe to ſee what would be the end of that Tragedy, and there by chance a Damoſell laied to his charge, that he was a Diſciple of this ſeditious fellow now taken: then came ſo great a faintneſſe and flying from perſecution into his minde, that he thought it a very light trifling matter, though he denyed Christ for a time, and ſeemed to doe as the Iewes did, while hee was among them. For he purpoſed doubtleſſe to keepe Christ ſtill in his heart for all that. For it is not to be thought, that *Peter* was aſſailed with ſo deepe a wickedneſſe, that he intended to throw his Chriſt quite out of his heart. But yet as ſtout a fellow as he was, with all his vnfeaſonable warineſſe and light dallying, he had ſuch a foyle, that he had almoſt followed the ſteps of *Iudas*, if God had not holden him vp.

For Christ remembred him of his faile with a winke, which made him ſo afraid, that he wept bitterly, and forthwith he withdrew himſelfe out of the doores. He excuſed not himſelfe, neither was the torment of his conſcience eaſed for all that, hee was compelled by circumſtances, I meane, for feare of bodily harme, to ſay one thing with his mouth, and thinke cleane contrary in his heart: but he was as guilty as *Iudas* was, and ſhould haue beene damned as well as he, if he had not riſen vp againe

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by repentance and faith in Christ. Goe to now, and say for thy selfe, that thou art moued by certain circumstances to say one thing with thy mouth, and thinke another with thy heart. *Pilate* also had a minde to play Iack of both sides, when he confessed so often, that Christ was guiltlesse, and at length, in the sight of all the Iewes, and before Christs face, washed his hands, and yet for all that, he deliuered Christ to be nailed on the Crosse.

He thought him blamelesse both towards Christ, and towards the Iewes, for he would faine haue contented both parts, but yet the water he washed with could not purge the vnrighteous Iudge from this sinne. For he himselfe also was made afterward to suffer, and what he did, and what paines he threw himselfe (wretched man) headlong into, it will appeare more largely at the day of Iudgement.

Well, set an example before thine eyes that chanced very lately. There was in *Italy* one *Franciscus Spiera*, a right famous wise man in worldly affaires. Hee increased so well in the sincere Doctrine of the Gospell, that he set it forth vnto others also very frankly and boldly. So when he was betrayed by his backe friends, and called to a reckoning, for feare of losse of body and goods, he promised to recant, and did so indeede. For his hope was, that albeit he was compelled to recant with his mouth, yet he would keepe Christ, whom he had professed, still in his heart, and satisfie his friends secretly afterward. But he was stricken forthwith by the iudgement of God, and fell (most wretched man) into so deepe desperation, and feeling of the wrath of God, and eternall damnation, that from that time forth there could no comfortable sayings picked out of the Fountaines of holy Scripture ease him one iot, and so at last being ouercome with those continuall torments of conscience, hee dyed. Surely, it is not without great cause that this horrible example falleth out in these dayes. Doubtlesse, our mercifull good God would faine call vs backe from this sinne, lest we should (as God forbid) prouoke the like iudgement to fall vpon our owne heads. But peraduenture these be the destinied raging furors of the world before the last day, which commeth shortly at hand; and that maketh the deuill to be the more angry at Christ his treader downe, and prouoketh men the more fiercely to commit all kindes of sinne innumerable one in the neck of another.

Therefore let vs pray to God from the bottome of our hearts, that it would please him to bridle the Deuils outrage, to defend vs from so hainous sinnes, and to grant vs speedy repentance, *Amen.*

Eightly, Christ seemeth to define this sinne with sore words, *Mat.* 12.

All sinne and blasphemy shall be forgiuen vnto men; but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiuen. And whosoeuer speaketh a word against the Sonne of man, it shall be forgiuen him. But he that speaketh a word against the holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiuen him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. This lesson he kniteth by and by vnto the saying that I alledged before: *He that is not with me, is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* To betray the Word vnto the Papists against a mans conscience, of a set purpose, and with a certaine crafty cloking, to shunne persecution (which euer followeth the preaching of the Gospell) by vnlawfull meanes, to be the first that maketh men to shrinke, to giue other occasion to stand in doubt, to confirme the Papists in their errors by his back-sliding, and to giue them occasion to persecute, not to reproue blaspemies and persecutions, or secretly to set them forward, and yet not to be contented to haue the sinne found fault at, but to defend and say, the Church and politicall order be preserued by this meanes, where neuerthelesse the ouerthrow of the Church is open before mens eyes: how hainous a sinne this is, and how farre it is off from the sinne against the holy Ghost, be thou thy selfe iudge. I say not nay, but this sinne may be forgiuen: but I feare lest repentance be ouer-hard to come by, yet I wish it vnto all from the bottome of my heart. The reason is, because this sinne rauisheth and deceiueth men with the spiced appearance and sweetnesse of it. If thou be polluted with murther, whoredome, theft, or such like grosse sinnes, thou maist a great deale more easily espy the euill shape and foulnesse, with the punishment thereof, bee afraid of it in thy heart, and aske God mercy for Christs sake (for these sinnes are so farre out of rule, that they can be excused by no possible meane) then if thou were enthralled in this sinne of wauering or dissembling, and playing lacke of both sides, for in this case there are innumerable circumstances that seeme to excuse the matter fairely: wife, children, houshold, worldly substance, and many other matters that should not bee put vnaduisedly in hazard. Thou wilt say, there is a great hope that the truth may be safe, the peace of the Church and of the Politicall estates may be preserued by this colourable cloking. Besides that, there bee men of high degree, that follow the same trace: with these and such other reasons, the Deuill trimmeth vp this sinne so finely, that it is thought to be but a small mote, that lyeth in the heart. But marke the end, a man cannot tell what shall befall in the late euening. For a time may come that it will weigh peraduenture so heauy on thy heart, that thou wouldest thinke the weight of Heauen and earth hanged on that only sinne. Therefore eft-soones I beseech God grant speedy repentance. For if the end

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be good, all is good. Hereunto accordeth the saying of Christ, *Luk.* 11. *When the vncleane spirit is gone out of a man, hee walketh through dry places seeking rest. And when he findeth none (he saith) I will returne againe vnto my house, whence I came out, and when he commeth, he findes it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seuen other spirits worse then himselfe, and they enter in and dwell there. And the end of that man is worse then the beginning.* What doe these players of both hands else, then trim vp the Deuils Parlour, and set open the doores for the Deuill and his traine to come in? For their consciences lye sleeping in security, contemning all manner of Religions, and dally with the most manifest instruments of the Deuill in Gods matters.

Finally, why doe they spend so much waste labour? For there shall neuer player of both hands come to his purpose by these meanes. For this is all their purposed end: to keepe peace, tranquility, lands, goods, wife and children, in safety, what shift soeuer they make, though it bee with neuer so naughty a wife: and that they let for no labour. But they shall faile of their purpose.

As for example: The Iewes cried out to haue Christ rid out of the world by any meanes, lest the Romans should come and take their place, and vndoe their Nation. But were they past that perill, when they were rid of Christ, that seditious fellow, as they called him? Nay, the matter that they were most afraid of, fell by the iust iudgement of God vpon their heads plentifully. Doe not the Heathen mens sayings accord to the same purpose? *Incidit in Scillam cupiens vitare Charybdim.* When hee thought to shunne *Charybdis*, he dropped into *Scilla*, a worse place. Also, *Dum vitant Stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.* When fooles shunne one vice, they runne into a contrary worse. Christ saith, *Mat.* 16. *He that would saue his life, shall lose it: and he that will lose his life for my sake, shall saue it. For what availeth it a man, if he winne the whole world, and lose his owne soule? Or what exchange shall a man giue to saue his soule?* It lyeth not in our wisdome, but it is the onely worke of God to gouerne the Church and to keepe it in safeguard. As it is not the worke of man, but of God, to preserue fruits from sharpe tempests in the sommer season. I haue heard Gardeners tell (and it is worth the obseruation) how they haue marked some thrifty forecasting Husbands, that haue wiped off the Snow from the blossomes of Trees (for sometimes it is so sharpe weather in Germany, that the trees are couered with snow after the blossomes bee come out) and yet they haue borne no fruit that yeere. Contrariwise, of those Trees that the snow hath beene let alone vpon, God hath kept the soft tender blossomes, and they haue brought forth great plenty of fruit.

These examples happen not all by chance, but they doe plainly reproue the vnaduised temerity of man, and declare the gouernement of God. And after the selfe same fashion doth God gouerne his Church. Wee learne by the Histories of all ages, that the Church of God hath flourished and increased most specially, when it hath beene the sorest persecuted, contrary to all wise mens opinions and iudgements, as it might bee declared by the examples of all ages, but I will knit vp the matter briefly.

It is euident therefore, that a Christian man may not lawfully play the Neuter or Iack of both sides after this sort, that a shift may be found to keepe him in friendship with two parts, the one being contrary to the other (as the Papists and the Gospellers are) in Gods causes, and in matters pertaining to the soules health.

But these Neuters or Iacks of both sides, which spring vp in all ages most plentifully, would not be counted block-heads, nor to speake no wiser then a Calfe; but that they haue great weighty reasons why they doe as they doe. First, they would haue all men perswaded, that they intend nothing else by their practice, but the wealth and tranquility of the Church of God, and their country. Indeede there can be no better, nor more honourable matter spoken of, nor a ioyfuller thing heard of, then this intent; but if a man looke a little neerer vpon the matter, all is but talke of painted faire words to make fooles faine. And the proofe of their high promises turne to the greatest harme both of the Church and Common-wealth, that can be.

Thou wilt aske mee, How can that bee? I will tell thee in a word. For these worldly Hypocrites doe all things hypocritically, they seeke not after these good things after the proper and right order and manner, as they ought to do. For first of all, they stand more vpon the safeguard of their owne goods, and the aduancement and preseruation of their owne dignity and power, than they doe vpon the glory of God, and wealth of their Country, as it is manifest in that they will haue all manner of Religion to serue their turne and commodities, that it make no disquietnesse in any condition. And for that cause there be almost none made of those councels, but such men as are thought to be skilled and practised in worldly affaires, and care more for corporall things then things that be spirituall and euerlasting. As for those that be godly and faithfull Ministers of the Church, they are hated as if they were firebrands of sedition. They are snaffled, that they shall not talke too sharpely against those most greedy rauening wolues that worry vp Christs sheepe in euery corner. So they prouide first for their houses, money, and bodies, and afterward

ward how the truth may be preserued. For this is the iudgement of the children of this world, that religion may a great deale more easily bee kept, than Honour, Riches, Power, and safegard of mens bodies. For if these be once lost, it will be very hard to recouer them againe, or not possible at all. Where notwithstanding their chiefe and their first care ought to be for the defence of the truth, as Christ commandeth; *Seeke first the Kingdome of God and the righteousnesse thereof, and all other things shall be giuen you, Mat. 6.* Moreouer, they are not afraid to frame their doings after Antichrists fashion, and to follow his trade in no small matters: and that after a preposterous manner. For when they perceiue, that there can be no concordance made in the chiefe Articles of the faith without great damage of the truth, they would faine make some shew at least in externall matters to bleare mens eyes withall: whereas they ought first to prouide for Gods word, and afterward for externall matters.

To be short, they bend their studie and endeuour most principally to deceiue both God and men. First, God himselfe, in that they thinke hee will be content, although men for dread of enemies and persecution, and for loue of their owne pelfe confesse not the truth directly, specially seeing they minde not to cast cleane away the truth, that they haue acknowledged, and another day, when the rage and furie of persecutors is mitigated and swaged, they will professe it more plainly. They thinke also to deceiue men by the same shift, in that they either keepe silence, or promise that the world will change in many things, or else shew themselues obedient in small trifling matters. What? Is this to doe good vnto the Church and to the Countrey, when the confessing of the Gospell lieth in the dust, which God would not haue kept in secret, but to stand forth and giue light, as it were in a high and bright place? When the crosse of persecution (one of the trustiest companions that the Gospell hath) is feared and auoided by vnlawfull meanes? When the Ministerie of the word is hindred, and the Ministers fraied away? When many mens hearts are tormented and wounded? When many waxe faint hearted Gospellers, and fall headlong into godlesse pleasures of the world? When subiects bodies, lands, and goods are at the Papists pleasure? When the persecutors haue free liberty to make hauocke? And when occasion is giuen to worry all godly folks? These, & far greater discommodities than these, are within the compasse and deuise of them, that play on both hands. It is manifest therefore, that it is nothing but vaine shew of painted words, that they so largly prate concerning the wealth of the Church and their Countrie. Thus much touching their intent that they vaunt of. Now let vs marke their obiections, but I will be short.

They say thus, The tranquilitie of the Church and the quietnesse of the Countrey may be lawfully sought for by all possible meanes. Who saith nay to that, except all the Diuels in hell lead him? But hearken how. It ought to be done in due manner, and by lawfull meanes, in the iust order, and to the proper end that it is ment vnto. Yea, say they, but the cause why we play on both hands, and keepe company somewhat with both parts, is, that our desire is to haue the Church in tranquilitie, and peace in the realme, when we be content to yeeld in some things, and in some other things to doe as the Papists doe. For by this meanes the enemies malice is asswaged, that they deuoure not vp all at once.

I answer. First I aske thee, why should the enemies malice be put backe and asswaged, in any wise, by this fayning and colorable cloaking, tell me? Is it not because they take thine halting so, that thou wilt apply to them, and either cleane cast away, or else abate a great deale of thy former earnestnesse, which thou vsedst a little before in confessing of the truth: and that thou wilt consent vnto them at length, not onely in part, but plainly altogether? Yea indeed is it. Now therefore weigh, whether it bee not against the word of God and thine owne conscience, to seeke rest and peace after this fashion: that is, by outward appearance of denying of the truth, what pretence so euer it be? Marke the histories among Gods people, what Plagues God smote them withall, as often as they were afraid of mercilesse foraigne Nations, and in changing religion and bringing in heathenish Godseruice sought for peace and came in league with them. The confessing of the truth ought to giue place to no manner of thing on the earth: for it perraineth to the glory of God. Therefore those that take too much care for the getting of the wealth of this world, and yet thinke that they will afterward not vtterly forsake the truth, had rather doubtlesse haue things of this world, than heauenly things, and doe dread the enemie of the body, more than the enemie of the soule. And the most sure end of this kinde of peace-making is to offend the godly, which also waxe faint hearted by the example of their guides, and to confirme the Papists in their errours, and to allow, or at least to winke at the lyes and blasphemies of the Papists a great deale too much. Persecution also against them that confesse the truth, although they allow it not secretly in their hearts, yet at the least they speake not against it. This wee are taught also by the experience of all ages, that we should not readily heare the godly to be taxed as ouer curious, and to plead for themselues too soone, as some that seeme learned vse to obiect with shew of great grauitie. For hereby the enemies become more cruell, and murther the confessours of the truth more furiously in euery corner, by the instigati-

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on of their god Satan, when they are thus applied vnto or winked at, and as they construe the matter, approued? And is this to set the Church in rest and safegard, or to cause battaile and persecution against it? And whether this may be done with a good conscience or not, thou thy selfe shalt see: For experience shall be able easily to teach thee.

Why then, is there none agreement to bee made with the enemies of the truth? Is there no way to be sought? Yes, so it be done in the right order, and without iniurie and reproach of the truth, and without slander, it is both lawfull, yea and it is our speciall prayer, that it may be brought to passe. But to begin the matter with the wrong end before, as it is for the most part, it is both dangerous and pernitious: to say no more of it. The foundation and chiefe point of our religion is sound doctrine, reuealed from heauen out of the eternall Fathers bosome. That doctrine must needs lead the way, and all other matters of lesse necessitie must follow out of it. Therefore if thou goe about agreement, begin here, and see whether the aduersaries can be brought to this passe, to forsake their dreames and subscribe to Gods onely truth: And to assent vnto the Articles of the Faith rightly and truly set forth among vs. If thou canst bring this about, doubtlesse the agreement will be very easie concerning externall matters that were instituted by mans authority. For the rule of Gods word shall easily scoure and purge such things. And as for the superstitions that bee annexed, and the opinions concerning necessity and merit, they shall vanish and fall away of their owne accord. But when wilt thou bring this to passe? I feare lest it will bee to late: For I can scarcely perswade my selfe, that we shall be rid quite of this kinde of men while the world lasteth. And it is an old saying: *Thou looseſt thy labour in washing an Æthiopian to make him white.* And the order is most foulely turned vp side down, when the agreement or conformitie of externall matters is first sought at their hands, which haue most grosly soiled those outward things with horrible superstitions and blasphemies, and infected them as it were with deadly poison. Neither shalt thou be able to make that swarme of men to set forth any thing so purely, but some contagious infection is mingled withall, which although it seeme not so at the first sight, yet soone after, it doth vse to shew it selfe. Moreouer, which is the greatest matter of all, they are most deadly enemies of the truth, they allow it not, no, they haue so hardned their heart, that they will neuer allow the sound doctrine, or Articles of the faith, truly and rightly as they bee set forth among vs. And as long as they are of that resolution, as the Papists are a great deale more stoutly, than we, they will not suffer one haire of their abuses in ceremonies to be abated, things (as we tell them) of most light

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force, but they count them of most weightie importance. And why? Because they seeke saluation of soules in them. Wherefore then makest thou thy selfe so busie, thou mad man? Whereto goest thou about to clense the pudled brooke, seeing the fountaine that the water commeth out of, is troubled and mared? Learne of the Physitians, what is to be done in so weighty matters, and in what order a man should proceed. Doe not they that are any whit well learned and circumspect search the fountaine and originall root of the disease in a mans body, and goe about to heale it first, and then take cure of the outward parts afterward? If they did otherwise, might they not bee reckoned rather for botchers than Physitians, and marre all that they take in hand? Christ saith, *Matth.* 12. *Either make the tree good, and the fruit of it good, or make the tree bad, and the fruit of it bad, for the tree is knowne by the fruit.*

Christ prescribeth the order, that the tree must first be planted naturally good and fruitfull, that good fruit may spring of it. And Ceremonies are as it were fruits, that ought to grow out of the sincere word of God. Therefore the chiefe point of forecast ought to be, that we should accord in the word or Articles of the faith. And when this cannot be obtained, that Prepostorous agreement is fooliſh and to no purpose, nay, it is impossible to be brought to passe. Remember I pray you, that wee reason not here of worldly affaires, let them haue their pleading place and their owne libertie, but our talke is of Gods matters, which we ought to commune of after a godly and aduised manner: For they haue not a nose of waxe, to be turned at a mans pleasure, as it is said that worldly lawes are sometimes abused. But may not a man lawfully cloake and colour the matter for a time? Did not *Abraham* denie *Sara* to bee his wife ofter than once? Did not *Dauid* counterfeit as though he had beene a foole in the presence of King *Achis*? Came not *Nicodemus* to our Lord in the night season, and in the day time made it goodly as though hee had nothing to doe with Christ?

I answer. First, for all that, they did not contrary to the confession of the truth, they allowed not manifest Idolatries, nor the word of God to be depraued. But thou craftily creepest into the enemies bosome to make them thy friends, and receiuest some of their proceedings either in doctrine or in obseruances, giuing them iust cause to hope, that thou wilt subscribe to all their superstitious religion; whereupon they maintaine all their errors the more stoutly, because they haue won thee to be an aider, either with all thy heart, or in countenance at least. Then the godly that see this, become faint hearted, and cannot tell what they should reckon of thee. And the belly-cheere Epicures following thine example, fall

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to the enemies side twice so fast as thou doest. There is a great difference therefore betweene thee and *Abraham* and other such like rehearsed. They be cleane contrary the one to the other, and the manner of their doings is vnlike. Besides that, how canst thou tell, whether they did so onely vpon their owne head, or at Gods speciall commandement? But as for thee, thou hast Gods commandement to confesse the truth before all men, which thou hast acknowledged and receiued.

Therefore in this case when thou hast to doe among the Papists, thou oughtest not to hide the truth, but rather speake of it openly vnto them. There is also no small difference betweene the weake, that as yet vnderstand not the truth, and them that haue acknowledged it, and confessed it a good while, and yet vpon a set purpose will be silent, where they ought plainly to speake. As for *Nicodemus*, he was yet weake, and so was *Ioseph* of *Arimathea*, of whom the Scripture maketh no mention till Christ suffred. But yet *Nicodemus* when they laid their heads together to make Christ away, obiected himselfe stoutly, and resisted their bloud-thirstie deuises to the vttermost of his power; and *Ioseph* was so well confirmed at the time of Christs passion, that hee sticked not in the sight of many *Iewes* to take downe Christs body from the crosse, and burie it most honorably and with most high reuerence. But, thou goest to the Papists of thine owne accord, and clokest and dissemblest with them, not of infirmitie nor ignorance, but vpon a false wile for temporall gaine sake, or for feare of temporall harmes. And yet among thy companions thou wilt looke to be counted for a constant fauorer of the vncorrupt truth, and a very forward Christian. And so among the Papists thou wilt not bee reckoned a false wily childe, that plaieth Iudasly and faslywith them. Tell me, how can these stand together? I thinke thou wilt not say it commeth of weaknesse, and thine owne conscience will not suffer thee to call it a confession of the truth. How then? Marrie, thou wilt say, it is a good and a necessary forecast to maintaine peace, and peraduenture the Papists may bee prouoked to receiue the truth. Of the first I haue already proued in few words, that peace is rather hindred by yeelding to the Papists. For they thinke they doe well to murder the godly, when great men seeme to fauor their side, though it be but in outward semblance. Concerning the latter point we shall see anone, whether it be possible to draw the Papists to our iudgement, by our dissembling of the truth. I will neuer thinke it like to be true; neither doe I finde example in any histories, and though there were some examples, yet respecting the vntowardnesse of men at this day, I can scarce thinke it could be brought about. Therefore a homly plaine direct confession of the truth seemeth to be best & most profitable.

Salomon saith, *Pro.* 27. *Better is open correction, then hidden loue.* Tush, but they alleadge *Naaman* the *Syrian* also, which desired *Elisæus* to dispense with him, that for as much as when the King went into the Temple of his Idole, he vsed to leane vpon *Naamans* shoulders, hee might also goe in with him, and bow his body when the King did, and the Prophet granted him. Hereof they gather, that they may lawfully counterfeit in some things when they are among the Papists, or doe somewhat like their doings: But they are in a wrong boxe to bring in such examples. For singular examples are no vniuersall rules. But so it fareth, when they can imagine no sufficient cloake for the raine, they winde and turne euery thing that they thinke maketh for them, though it bee neuer so little to the purpose. Mine answer is therefore, that many men haue done many things, which are singular, and not vniuersally to be approued by imitation. *Abraham* would haue cut off his owne sonnes head, when God bad him; but thou maiest not doe so. God dispensed with his people to haue many wiues at once, yet for all that thou maiest in this our age haue no moe wiues at once, than one. And as for *Naaman*, he promised plainly, that he would neuer doe sacrifice to the Idole more: Besides that, he laded two Mules with the earth of Israel, which hee powred vpon that place, lest he should catch any infection of the earth, that was consecrated vnto Idols. So that by his abstaining from the common sacrifices, which he had vsed before, he declared euidently enough, that he misliked their Idolatry. It was also nothing but a ciuill seruice, that hee did there vnto the King, when he leaned on his shoulders. Therefore there can no *Iacke of both sides* defend his doings with this example. But the gentle *Iackes of both sides* start backe then to these temporall matters, which trouble their minds too too sore. Except (say they) men yeeld in somethings to pacifie the Papists withall, then all will come to nought in a while, heauen and earth will goe together, as they say. Doe you not see how wretchedly minded many be? Why? it is better to keep the Church in some state, then to let it be vndone altogether: Yea sir, those are worthy to be counted wonderfull wise and well spoken men, that can speake on this fashion, and set out the matter with many and ample words. Contrariwise, they are counted either for starke fooles, or very wilfull persons, that doe in godly pietie dissent from them, or admonish them of some things whereof they ought to take aduised counsaile and deliberation.

Therefore I answer thus. Are yee not afraid also, lest heauen fall? Indeed seeing you are men of such high wit and foresight, you ought to consider these two things. First, the building of heauen is now old inough;

Secondly,

Secondly, that it lacketh props in euery place: Therefore yee should aduise all folkes, not to looke long to liue in sure safegard, but euery body to seeke out in time for holes to hide them in, or else (which were the more wittily done) to set props vnder heauen to hold it vp, as fast as they can. But to speake seriously, is it not a wonderfull rash, and shameless part for men to speake after this sort? Are you those most wise and discreet wary men, that are able to prouide, that the Church should not be in hatred of the highest estates of the world, and (to speake in a word) that it should not be vnder the crosse of persecution? peraduenture you were borne too late: For you might in the first vpspring of the Church haue holpen the matter.

The Church hath in all ages suffred great stormes, and Christ told before hand, that about the end of the world, furious outrage against godly people should waxe fiercer and fiercer. And God hath his considerations, why he suffreth vs now and then to bee handled more hardly. Yea, but the Church ought not to cast her selfe into such perils of her owne accord. True it is, but to confesse the truth, to reproue Idolatry, and other wicked vices, is not rashly to pull the crosse vpon her head, as you dreame. What doth the Church desire more than peace? But yet in such order and forme, that the confessing of the truth lye not in the dust, but stand vp manfully: For that must needs bee done, though all the world should be rent in peeces. But your wisedome would haue the truth kept close, or stand mewed at least, for feare of disquieting worldly commodities, Mat.10. and for feare of prouoking the Papists: Which is against the word of God, that saith; *Be not afraid of them, that kill the body, and cannot kill the soule; but rather be afraid of him that is able to throw both soule and body into hell fire.* Also, *Blessed are you when they shall persecute you, and speake* Mat.5. *all that nought is against you, lying, for my sake.* Item. *The time shall come,* 10.16. *that whosoeuer killeth you, shall thinke hee doth God good seruice.* Item. *Yee* Mat.10. *shall be hated of all men for my names sake: But hee that endureth still to the end, shall be saued: for his names sake,* he saith, that is, for confessing Christ hartily. Item. *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and his mother,* Luke 14. *his wife, and his children, his brethren and sisters, and his owne life too, hee cannot bee my Disciple.* But as for you, how is it, that you are so obstinate, so immoueable, so hard hearted, so void of sense and vnderstanding, that you consider not, what is good and profitable, either for your selues, or others.

I answer. Wee are not so senselesse, nor so cleane without vnderstanding, that this reason cannot enter into our heads, nor moue vs at all. But our iudgement is, that the confession of the truth ought to bee preferred

aboue all earthly things. And as for vs, we cause no vproares. We giue no Larums, as they falsly lay to our charge, but wee exhort all men diligently to the vttermost of our power to be constant in the word of God, to giue themselues to earnest prayers, and vnto patience. Wee are well content to be counted fooles with the children of this world, but wee can in no wise abide the slandrous name of sedition, and vnnaturall affection.

Yea, but the Papists are kindled by your stubborne stiffe standing. If you would somewhat bridle your tongues, and finde no fault with their lyes, or (to vse my tearmes more mannerly) with the state of the Papacy, and if you would seeme content to receiue some of the Papists proceedings, which are not of their owne nature wicked, then wee were all sure and safe.

I answer. We are the seruants of God and men, to the intent to declare without feare the truth (which is not of our new bringing forth, but was shewed before our time, and wee haue it in the bookes of the holy Scripture) that all may vnderstand, what the will of God is. And also that we should openly shew and confute the lyes, that are contrary to that onely truth of God, lest men should be deceiued with them, and perish for euermore. As also *Paul* doth account it among the offices of a Bishop, *To conuince them that be gaine-sayers. Tit.* 1. And Christ saith, *Iohn* 16. *The holy Ghost shall reproue the world of sinne, of righteousnesse, and of iudgement.* Moreouer, our dutie is to rebuke and lay load vpon wicked liuing, that men may bee conuerted vnto God, and aske him mercy, as *Paul* saith, 1 *Tim.* 5. *Rebuke them that offend openly before all men, that the rest may be afraid.* Therefore lyes and lying spirits must needs be reproued not onely in a generality, but also by direct specialty. And I pray thee what is more necessary? when a great man hath an enemy that laieth wait to spoile his subiects both of goods and life, hee telleth them of him not in generall words onely, that all his subiects may beware of him, but he expresseth his name directly, that they may auoid him?

What a mad matter were it then, if the like may not lawfully be done in this case, concerning the safegard of soules? Surely we that be Shepherds of mens soules, cannot choose but cry out vpon Sheepe-worrying Wolues? But to what end doe I spend my speech in vaine? The children of this world will not heare this, but thinke alwayes in their drowsie dreames, that they shall haue a Church without the Crosse or persecution.

Furthermore, this obiection is no small Argument, that such manner of men are as yet very raw Christians, and build a great deale too much

much vpon their owne wit, nay rather, that they are a great deale too rash, and without aduisement. For they thinke themselues able to search out all the Counsells of God, after what sort hee will gouerne and vphold the Church: and so they make God improuident and impotent, as though hee knew not how to relieue the Church from harmes in conuenient season, and as though hee had none other meanes to deliuer his people from iniury, but by this onely way that they haue inuented, that is, in yeelding to the Papists, and keeping the truth vnder couert.

Were it not thy duty to consider, that GOD is Almighty, and maruellous in his Saints, as the Psalme saith, Thinkest thou, that God knoweth not the secret counsels of his enemies, the Papists? Art thou not aduised, that all the haires of our head are numbred? And no man shall take them out of my hand? Hast thou not marked, that God hath in all ages preserued and glorified his Church, euen in the middest of persecution.

Although the aduersaries threaten neuer so sore, yet we must remember this saying of the second Psalme, *He that dwelleth in the Heauen shall laugh them to scorne, and the Lord shall haue them in derision.* Also, *The Lord confounded the counsels of the heathen*, *Psal.* 32. Item, *The Kings heart is in the Lords hand, he will turne it which way it pleaseth him*, *Pro.* 21. But I tell a tale to deafe men. It is their belly that maketh them so carefull, and so bestotteth them. Thereof commeth their whining. Finally, marke the proofe or euent, into what case thou bringest the Church with thy counsels. They say moreouer, there is very great hope, that the Papists may be allured by this crafty yeelding, to be the more indifferent to our Doctrine by little and little.

And it is a godly deuise to catch the enemies by this craft, and win them vnto Christ. This is craftily and fairely spoken indeed, and it is pleasing to many.

But I shall wipe away this reason in few words. *Paul* saith, *To the weake I became as weake*, 1. *Cor.* 9. In which place he prescribeth a rule, how the weake ought to be handled, that they start not backe at the first dash, but be brought in (as it were) by a traine faire and softly, lest all should be condemned at once in the beginning by them that are oppressed with blindnesse, and stand as yet in doubt. For the foundations of the true Doctrine must needes be first layed with them, and then are they to be orderly drawne out of errors, as it were out of a deepe miry Lake. Neuertheless, *Pauls* minde is not to haue the truth hidden, nor to play with the truth, but that such as be the lesse skilfull, should be

friendly and tenderly vſed at the firſt. And there is no doubt, but there are among the popiſh ſort ſome curable and very weaklings indeede, and namely among the lay-people, which albeit they thirſt after the pure Doctrine of the Goſpell, yet they are intangled ſtill with ſome bryers. For they haue beene brought vp in Popiſh religion, and nuſled in wicked opinions from their childhood vpward, that it will bee very hard to plucke them from them. Such we would beare patiently withall, ſo that they would yeeld to ſound Doctrine, and ſhew themſelues willing to learne. But yet the greateſt part of the Papiſts (and namely the Gouernours and ſuch as be about them) are no weaklings, but obſtinate and ſtiff-necked perſons, which haue heard and read the pure Doctrine of the Goſpell a great while: and know the ground worke thereof, which they are not able to ouerthrow. But for all that, they are at a full point, not to ſtart one inch from their popiſh draffe, blaſphemies, nor Idolatries.

So ye may heare them many times againſt their conſcience profeſſe, that they will neuer ſwarue from the Catholike Church of Rome, or the Popes Church, while the breath is in their bodies. What good then will thy faire ſpeech doe among them that are ſo bent? Looke alſo what tricks our Aduerſaries, the Papiſts, vſe. They contend all that they can, to make vs reuoke and yeeld to them, rather then to apply themſelues vnto vs. Are not the errors wherewith the more vnlearned ſort are wrapped in Popery againe, garniſhed with wonderfull iugling-tricks. Is there not compulſion and moſt cruell perſecutions practiſed, to driue men through feare at leaſt, to bring in and ſet vp the Popiſh religion againe? And ſo by falſe craft and violence their religion is eſtabliſhed. And indeede by this meanes they haue preuailed much in ſhort time. For there haue very many become Reuolters from the truth in ſuch places, as we little thought, and by their cunning fraud they dayly proceed farther.

He meaneth the Interim that was in Germany.

Moreouer, the holy Scripture teacheth, that Antichriſt ſhall horribly haue the vpper hand till the worlds end. It is to no purpoſe therefore, and a vaine hope, that they will be drawne to conſent, either with our keeping of ſilence, or too much relenting vnto them.

And what concord thinkeſt thou can be made with Chriſt, being offended and angry? And hee cannot chuſe but bee offended, when the truth is hidden to auoid perſecution, and when the truth is not plainly confeſſed, but ſo me things are receiued to pleaſe the Papiſts withall, that betoken a ſhrinking, though not in all mens hearts, yet in the moſt part. But what neede many words? The Hiſtories ſhew, that there haue more of the aduerſaries (as God hath wonderfully ordered the matter) alwaies come to the truth by open and plaine confeſſing, then by ſuch

baſe

base wauering. I would heare but of one man, that hath made any manner of signe, though it were neuer so little, that he embraced or allowed the truth the rather through dissembling or yeelding, especially in the time of persecution. It is manifest, that all men hold it for a sure argument, that we haue hitherto maintained erronious opinions, which we must needs now be ashamed and sorry for: and that all their Popery is most true and most sure, because they dissemble nothing.

Therefore this is the pith and whole intent of all this dissention: That the Belly must be cared for, and Religion laid behind the doore, or throwne quite away. But seeing the belly wanteth eares, let these few words presently suffice to beate downe that vnseasonable discretion of such as as play Iack on both sides. Peraduenture, it were worth the labour to speake in this place also, how great, how grieuous, and how manifold a sinne it is for a man to shew himselfe so wauering a Iacke of both sides, that some may haply be brought to ponder the matter somwhat more deepely. But this is already spoken of here and there in many places. Therefore I will vse but few words. First, it is no small presumption and temerity for a man to meddle with the gouernement of God, and to goe about to temper all things with his owne vaine Philosophy. As one said, that if there were no certaine God gouerning all things, he would set all the world in order with his owne wisdome. O vain sawcy presumption of a creature, and blaspemy against the Kingdom of Christ. For what doe these folkes else, that shunne the Crosse of persecution so carfully and so curiously, with their dissembling or hiding of the truth, than inuade the gouernment of Christ in his Church, with their owne reason, that is, with their owne fleshly, worldly, and preposterous wit, and goe about to teach men that Christ wanteth wisdome, and the King of glory knoweth not how he should order his people, that is to say, he should suffer no body to come in hazard of life and goods for the pure Word of the Gospell, that the Church may be secure, careless, and be at agreement with the enemies of the truth, that is, the sheepe and wolues together. What could be more pleasant to reason, (or as the Scripture termeth it) to our flesh? But Christ doth with great forecast wipe away this dreame of reason. *He that will follow me* (saith he) *let him take vp his crosse and follow me.* Also, *ye shall be hated of all men for my Names sake.* And *Paul* singeth the same song, *All that will liue godly in Christ, shall suffer persecution.* And it is to be specially noted that Christ saith, *The Disciple is not aboue his Master.* And *Paul* saith, *We must needs be made like the Image of God.* Christ the King and head of his owne Church, purchased and confirmed this his wonderfull Kingdome, which he

he hath vpon earth in the congregation of the godly with his passion and bloud shed, and not by running away from the crosse, or dissembling of the truth. And so all the Citizens of that kingdome must needs conforme themselues to this example, though accompanied with trouble and sorrow. For it is nothing else, but the kingdome of the Crosse, nor euer was, nor euer shall be any other.

Count the yeeres in order from the beginning vnto this day, and you shall see, that there hath beene nothing in the Church sauing afflictions, and murthering of the godly. And in this same fashion of the Crosse Christ reioyceth to shew and bestow his mercy, power, wisedome, and helpe against the wisdome of man. So that he destroyeth the wisdome of the wise, and confoundeth all Philosophicall reasons.

The Poets haue a fable of *Phaeton*, that he was so presumptuously hardy, as to climbe vp into the chariot of the Sunne, for all that euer his father could say to him, disswading him, and telling him before hand, what would come of it. But he had no sooner begun his enterprise, but the gouernor was ouerthrowne, and all the world wasted with fire. Euen so now our rash *Phaetons* mount vp on high, & presume to prescribe laws to God himselfe, how the Church must be gouerned, & by what meanes the Crosse of persecution must be auoided, marry, by a much better way then God hath ordained, that is to say, not by plain confessing of the truth, not with praier, subiection nor patient abiding for Gods help, but by crafty dissembling of the truth, by yeelding to the Papists, and other sleighty shifts. But many haue experience of *Phaetons* fal, and stand looking, while the fire flameth, which they haue cast oyle into, to quench it withal: Some of them giue ouer their enterprise, and some run on, which except God turn them, shall haue the greater downfall. *Paul* reckoneth this one onely wisdome of the godly, to be the greatest wisdome of all other, that they are fooles before the world, that they acknowledge the gouernment of God to be past mans reason, and submit themselues wholly to the will of God. It is a great wickednesse therefore for a man to imagine to frame the Kingdome of Christ vnto his owne carnall and worldly mother-wit. For hee offendeth against the first table. Secondly, how hainous a sinne it is before Christ (for the world florisheth it ouer as finely as it can) may be perceiued if it were by nothing else but this, that Christ telleth before hand, that they shall be damned eternally, which make so much a doe to runne away and escape from the Crosse of persecution. For hearken what he saith; *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brethren and his sisters, and euen his owne life too, hee cannot be my Disciple, Luk.* 14. Also, *he that loueth father or mother more*

then

then he doth me, is not worthy of me. Againe, *He that findeth his life, shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall finde it, Mat.* 10. Let no man maruell, why many that be crosse-shunners, make a tush at these sayings. For it commeth very seldome in their mindes to thinke vpon euerlasting life, but they had rather haue things present then tarry for things to come: they will not buy hope at so deare a price, that is to say, the price of their bloud. Thirdly, to auoid the Crosse of persecution after this sort, that is, in playing mum-budget, and doing some points of Popery, as the enemies of the truth, the Papists doe, is no small likelihood that they will deny Christ. For thou art ashamed of this piteously afflicted Christ, and of the truth, which hath the crosse of persecution for her inseparable Companion. But Christ saith, *He that is ashamed of me and of my sayings, the sonne of man shall be ashamed of him, when he commeth in his glory, Luk.* 9.

Fourthly, to be an hinderer to others, and to giue occasion vnto offences, albeit the children of this world passe little for it, yet it is a hainous sinne before God. For mens hearts are estranged from the Kingdome of Christ, yea, they be rather plucked away as it were by the hand, and hurled into the mouth of Hell.

All men for the most part are so affected by Nature, that they looke vpon mens examples, whereby they either stand or fall, and especially the example of such men, as haue beene in any estimation with the world. For when they see, that their back sliding or crafty cloking auoideth the crosse of persecution, then first of all their hearts quaile, doubt, and deuise diuers fashions. And at last they runne quite out of kinde, and fall altogether to godlesse security, and become Epicures.

By this meanes the Kingdome of Heauen suffereth violent wrong, and Martyrs wax very geason, when men reckon it for a speciall point of wisdome, to shift away the danger of suffering with Christ.

To be briefe, hereby the Church, or the number of Christians encreaseth not (as he said) by the bloud of Christians: the garden of Paradise is not watered with the slaughters of the godly, many a one is depriued of that most glorious Crowne in which they ought to appeare before Christ; *Simon* of *Cyrene* is driuen from the Crosse, that hee should not beare it after Christ. But this is a very sore saying, *Woe be to the man, by whom offence commeth.*

Fiftly, by this halting of both sides, the Deuill hath a window too wide open to scatter all his lies farther, & to plant them deeper. For those that be the wickedest persons of all, are confirmed euery one in their errors. For they hold it as an euident argument, that the relenting of the other part proueth all their Popery to be agreeable to the truth.

Here they glory and triumph, as though they had won the field. And not that only, but they are also incensed to enterprise the more boldly whatsoeuer they will against the godly, & to thinke they do most thankworthy seruice vnto God in that behalfe. And albeit there chance some Iacks of both sides, by this manner of dissimulation, to escape, yet the rest of the common people are in greater hazard, and the sword is made more ready to cut them off. Sixthly, it is a greater sin then persecution it selfe. For there is no persecution that doth so much hurt in the Church, as that foule relenting and dissembling of the truth doth. For it so marreth the whole cause it selfe, that the godly must stand in doubt, whether they ought to suffer death for the truths sake or not. These manner of torments doe cumber godly mens minds more grieuously than any punishment in the world. Yea, this sin is more hurtfull also to the Authors of it themselues, than if they persecuted Christians in their owne persons. For in as much as persecution is a grosse sin, a mans heart may acknowledge and abhor it the more easily, and come to earnest repentance the more speedily. But the playing Iacke of both sides is a sweet and a secret mischife, that is flourished ouer with goodly colours. Men thinke it may be done without offence to God, or hurt of conscience.

For their mind is on their hase peny, that is to say, to preserue their bodies and goods: Yea, and it hath this cloke for the raine, that it is for the welfare of the Church. Therefore it will bee very hard for folkes to acknowledge so commodious a matter to be sin, and to abhor it earnestly, & aske God mercy for it. So there is greater hope of repentance in an open blasphemous & bloudy persecutor, then in such a Iack of both sides.

Let not vs therefore suffer this sin to be easily interpreted with a faire fine tale: and let vs beseech the eternall Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, to bring them that are bewitched with these perswasions into the way againe, and grant vs all through his holy Spirit to be constant and patient, and to continue in stedfast hope of eternall life.

Now then what is to be done in such weighty matters, what way, what path must we hold? Certainly, it is the best, surest, and most wholsome way for vs all to abide still in the Kings high way, or the most sure beaten path, and to leane and forsake all by-walkes, which crafty wits inuent, that we may imbrace, and not start one inch from the Word of God, which by his benefit is most purely preached in this our Country, so that no man can be ignorant of it, except he make himselfe deafe and dolfish of set purpose. Let vs learne and teach that heauenly Word which God hath reuealed in this doting age of the world, euery one according to his duty, without additions or corruptions brought in by man. And let

vs confesse the truth, not ambiguously, but openly, directly and plainly according to this text: *Thy Word is a lanthorne to my feet.* Also, *I talked of thy Testimonies in the presence of Kings, and was put to no shame.* For doubtlesse, there is more good done by simple and plaine confessing of the Gospell, then by modest silence or liklihood of dentall. For God himselfe hath charged vs to confesse the truth, and cannot chuse but loue them that doe it with any danger or losse of their bodies or goods. It is a good and true saying: Christian mens bloud is a Seede, and in what field soeuer it is sowne, there spring vp Christian men most plentifully. And the experience of the Church accordeth with the saying from whence this manner of speech was taken.

Let vs vnderstand that the proper right coulour of Gods Church is the bloudy Crosse, but let vs settle our faith constantly vpon the promises concerning the presence and helpe of God, that God will either mitigate our miseries how horrible soeuer they be, or wipe them quite away, or else for a little suffering he will doe vs a greater good turne that shall endure for euermore. Let our faith also strengthen and cheere it selfe with these true considerations, that God is farre stronger then all our enemies, whether bodily or ghostly: And in his hand our time is, in whom we liue, moue, and are. Let our enemies (the Papists) vaunt, let them grin, let them stampe and stare, and breathe nothing else but Sword, Fire, and Gun-shot. Yet they shall not be able to touch one haire of our head, so much as with the tip of their finger, without the will and sufferance of God. And like as mad Dogs haue their limits, euen so Tyrants haue their limited meares, beyond the which (let them faine, let them practise, let them stirre what they will) they shall not passe. The Scripture saith, *Bloudthirsty and deceitfull men shall not liue out halfe their age.* *Psal.* 55. Also, *I haue seene the wicked exalted and aduanced aboue the Cedar trees of Libanus. And I passed by, and loe, he was not: I sought him, and his place was not found,* *Psal.* 37. And concerning the helpe of God, these be right comfortable sayings: *Esay* 46. *You that are borne in my wombe, I will beare you still vnto your old dayes, and vntil your head be gray. I haue made you, and I will sustaine you, I will beare you and I will saue you.* *Psal.* 34. *Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord shall deliuer them out of all.* *Psal.* 91. *When he is in trouble I am with him, I will deliuer him, and I will glorifie him.* Againe, *Behold, I am with you still vnto the end of the world. No man shall take my Sheepe out of my hand*: and such like Sentences.

It is certaine also, that the Church of God had neuer more glory and dignity, then when it was tossed and turmoiled with most extreme perils, as it were with most raging tempests. For then God hath declared

both his mercy and might after a wonderfull ſort. The Lords hand is not ſhortened yet. And albeit there can no manner of meanes be perceiued by mans reaſon; as when one that hauing made ſhipwracke, ſwimmeth in the midſt of the Sea, and ſeeth no hauen nor ſhore to wade vnto, yet God ſhall caſt vs forth one boord or other, and ſhew vs ſome hauen that we may ſtruggle out at length, and be moſt happily deliuered. And although we be drowned in the ſtormy tempeſts, yet the body of the congregation ſhall doubtleſſe abide ſafe and ſound. If God liue (as no man will call it in queſtion) the Church muſt needs liue too, as Chriſt ſaith, *Hiue, and you ſhall liue, Ioh.* 14. Moreouer, hee will ſaue the beſt thing in vs, euen our ſoule, though the body bee deſtroyed, according to theſe words, *He that will loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall ſaue it, viz.* God ſhall ſtrengthen vs with the holy Ghoſt, ſo that we ſhall be able cheerefully & ſtoutly to abide and ouercome all kinde of calamities. God doth not traine euery body through the red Sea, as he did the people of *Iſrael*: He keepeth not euery man vnburned in the fiery Furnaces, as he did *Daniels* companions: he preſerueth not all from care among the hungry Lions, as he did *Daniel* and others. There haue bin very many holy men & women ſwallowed vp, and are ſtill, with the furious woodneſſe of the world, as it were with gulfes of the earth: many haue had their bowels caſt to wilde beaſts, and into fire and water, but yet God hath not left them deſtitute of his helpe. He helpeth them, though not outwardly yet inwardly, ſo as their faith groweth ſo ſtrong, that they eſteeme all the ſorrowes and torments of their bodies for triſſles, in compariſon of that life & glory to come: and reioyce that they muſt die for confeſſing of Chriſt.

Chriſt deliuered not the firſt Martyr *Stephen* out of the hands of moſt mercileſſe murtherers, he kept him not from the violence of the ſtones that they hurled at his head. Chriſt ſuffered this to be done, as though he had not regarded this moſt bleſſed witneſſe of his. But yet hee was not farre from him. For euen there Heauen was ſet wide open to the moſt bleſſed Martyr, that with his bodily eyes he eſpied Chriſt ſtanding at the Fathers right hand, ſo as he might ſee, as it were, the gate open before his face, through the which he muſt by and by ſtep into euerlaſting bleſſednes. This matter doubtleſſe was a moſt ſure token vnto *Stephen*, that Chriſt was preſent with him at his ſuffring, and that ſame made him to reckon all the ſorrowes that he ſuffered but flea-bitings in reſpect of the glory that he ſhould ſtraightwaies enioy with his Chriſt. Therefore this opening and comforting that Chriſt ſhewed there, was doubtleſſe more welcome & ioyous vnto *Stephen*, then if he had deliuered him from the puniſhment without the ſame reuelation. God ſuffered *Laurence* to

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be broiled on a Gridyron for confessing of Christ. But hee preserued his soule and his faith after such sort, that he scarcely felt the coles that burned his body all ouer. And then when his soule was going out of his mouth, yet he spake to *Decius* with courage: *O thou tyrant, if thou thinke thy cruell minde not satisfied, cut out a peece of me now, and thrust it into thy mouth, that thou maiest take thy fill, and stanch thy stomacke against me.* This most holy man had not this hearty courage, nor spake these words of himselfe, but Emanuel that dwelled in him, and the holy Ghost that kindled his courage with a feruent faith and hope of eternall life, thus vpheld and encouraged this Martyr.

Therefore let vs not goe about to auoid perill by mans mother wit with the iniurie of Gods word, and confessing of Christ: let vs not bring the doting deuises of our owne reason into Christs kingdome. For God hath determined this resolutely with himselfe, that he will gouerne his Church after another fashion, then we thinke it conuenient; that is, he will suffer it to be pressed with the crosse of persecution, but not oppressed: exercised, but not destroyed. For that hee taketh to be the most wholesome way for the godly. There is so much wickednesse naturally grauen in all men, that in prosperity, and when they haue the world at will, they can easily looke on high, waxe stout, play the ruflers, vse Gods benefits without thankfulnesse, cast away all care touching earnest repentance out of their heart, they pray coldly and faintly, yea, they neglect God, & set more by temporall and carnall commodities, than by God, and feare the world more than God himselfe.

This is the very schoolehouse of the diuell himselfe, wherein he instructeth and bringeth vp his minions meet for his owne court. By reason whereof rest and peace doe many times a great deale more harme to the Church of God, than warre, banishment, and persecution it selfe. But God doth wittingly hold his people vnder the holy Crosse, as it were in a wrastling place, to teach them continuall repentance, that godly men and women may confesse their sinnes to be no small matters, seeing they are the occasions of calamities, that they may aske forgiuenesse by faith for Christs sake, and that they may giue themselues to prayer the more feruently (for without afflictions and euill intreating prayer waxeth cold) and so also that the mercy and goodnesse of God, may the more readily bee perceiued, yea, and the mighty power of God also, which is maruailous in his Saints, and riddeth them out of many encombrances, farre otherwise than mans reason doth perceiue. Therefore *Dauid* saith; *It is good for mee that thou hast chastened mee, for thereby I haue learned thy Statutes. Ps.* 119. Againe, *The Lord in*

his chastising hath chastised me, but not giuen mee ouer vnto death, Psal. 118. *I came not to send peace* (saith Christ) *but a sword,* Mat. 10. Also, *in the world you shall haue affliction,* Iob. 16.

When men stumble at this stumbling stone, and doe either transforme the Kingdome of Christ into a kingdome of this world; or otherwise would auoid some perils after the manner of man, *to wit,* in turning Religion as the higher powers will: then hath God euer from the beginning found the meanes, to destroy and confound, euen the best counsels that mans reason could deuise, according to the old Prouerbe; *Homo proponit, Deus disponit; Man purposeth, and God disposeth:* that is, God ordreth the matter another way. Also *Esa.* 8. *Make your selues strong, and you shall bee ouercome, gird your selues stoutly, and ye shall be ouerthrowne; lay your heads together, and your counsell shall not take effect; speake the word, and it shall not come to passe: for the Lord is with vs.*

Notwithstanding these words ought not to be taken captiously of any man. I say not, that the Church should wish to be in danger, nor rush willingly into perill: for that were but tempting of God. And who saith nay, (except he be beastly mad) but it is necessary & proficable for the Church to haue some quietnesse? For how could the Church be planted, and the people rightly instructed in the doctrine of saluation and true seruing of God, if the Church were tossed to and fro with continuall hurly-burlies, and had no abiding place for a season at leastwise? God of his great goodnesse doth sometimes allow his Church some Halcione daies, which men should thankfully accept and esteeme. But I talke here of the common fashion of the Church. It hath no perpetuall mansion and resting place, but wandereth about as a stranger for the most part.

Moreouer, there are none but vnlawfull meanes of auoiding perils and temptations reproued by me; that is to say, such as are practised with the iniury of the heauenly word of God, or doe let men from confessing of the truth, which must needs be plainly done, and nothing ought to hinder or let.

Let vs also beware of this with all diligent foresight, that we put not our trust in mans strength, for vaine is the helpe of man. And yet we fraile vessels are wonderfully bent to doe so. For seeing the helpe of God for the most part is hidden and marualous, it maketh vs to depend vpon those things that we are able to attaine vnto, as we deeme, by our owne senses. And this matter doth very much encomber euen them that be godly. But let vs therefore fasten our assured faithfull trust rather vpon God alone. *For he that trusteth in him shall stand fast like the mount Sion, and neuer bee moued,* Psal. 125. *And better it is to trust in the Lord, than in man. Better it*

is to truſt in the Lord than in Princes. Pſal. 118. Againe, *The Lord ſaueth neither by ſword nor by ſpeare,* 1 *Reg.* 17. And *Oſea* 1. *I will ſaue them by the Lord their God, and I will not ſaue them by bow, nor by ſword, nor by battaile, neither by horſes, nor by horſemen.* And in this behalfe God doth for the moſt part teach vs by experience, how vaine, and what loſt labor it is to leane to the onely ſuccor of mans helpe. For he ſtrippeth men almoſt of all the helpes, wheron they hanged, & afterward he ſheweth euidently, that he is the only defender and ſauiour of his Church, that men ſhould not thank their own power, but aſcribe all to God alone, with whom it is all one to ſaue either by many or by few, yea and without all viſible meanes of helpe. Howbeit I would not haue any man to cauill at my ſaying, as though we ſhould caſt away all helpes and lawfull meanes that may be had without offence; for wee ought onely ſo to put our confidence in them, that our cheefe truſt may be in nothing but in God alone, which is the buckler, ſhield, & ſure fortreſſe of all beleeuers; ſo as in this behalfe the Church may be diſcerned from the Heathens. For the ſafegard of the Church dependeth of the Lord, and as for the Heathen, they put their hope in themſelues & in their worldly powers. As prophane *Aiax* ſaith in *Sophocles, That euery Cowheard getteth the victory, if God helpe him: but hee would haue the victory without God.* But *Dauid* ſaith, *Thou Lord art my preſeruer, thou art my glory, and the lifter vp of my head. Thou haſt ſtricken all them that were againſt me without a cauſe, thou haſt daſhed out the teeth of ſinners, Pſal.* 3. *The Lord is my light and my ſaluation, whom then ſhall I feare? The Lord is protector of my life, whom ſhall I be adreed of? Pſa.* 17. *The Lord is my helper, and my defender, and in him my heart hath truſted, and I was holpen, Pſal.* 28. *Thou giueſt Kings their ſafegard, Pſal.* 143.

Let vs alſo ſubmit our ſelues vnto the will of God, when we ſee tempeſtuous ſtormes bluſter againſt vs on euery ſide. Let vs not murmur againſt ſo many afflictions, nor be angry with God and his word: let vs not ſhake off the confeſſing of the truth: let vs not run into vnlawfull meanes, but ſticke hard, and go through with the matter, and looke patiently for help at Gods hand, as the Pſalme ſaith; *Looke for the Lord, ſticke to it manfully, be of good cheere, & abide the Lords leaſure, Pſ.* 27. *The Lord became the poore mans refuge, and his helpe when he was in trouble. Pſ.* 10. In another place; *If he tarrie, abide his comming; for he will come, and not tarry, Aba.* 2.

For this obedience God requireth at our hands euen in corporal things, that we ſhould with patience ſubmit our ſelues vnto his will. But that is alſo paſt our power: and therefore wee are promiſed helpe of the holy Ghoſt, which we muſt pray diligently for. As *Pſal.* 37. biddeth vs; *Submit thy ſelfe vnto the Lord, and pray vnto him.* In which words theſe two things

things are most fitly ioyned together: First, patience and subiection, which acknowledgeth the will and chastisement of God: Secondly, Prayer, which telleth vs where, and after what manner wee must craue helpe, euen of God alone, with feruent and continuall gronings, and cheare our hearts with his comfort, who is the true comforter.

Watch and pray, saith Christ vnto his Disciples, *that you enter not into temptation.* And what the efficacie of true prayer is, the histories of holy Scripture make report, that the greatest matters of all are many times obtained and effected by godly mens prayers. And vnto prayer there belong very many things, which cannot bee had in the Church but out of the rolles of Gods records: As to acknowledge God, to repent, to beleeue constantly in the Mediatour, to know the promises concerning things both bodily and ghostly, to know the state of the Church, to haue sure hope of euerlasting life, and to looke for helpe, or for mitigation of our paines in this life. And such like.

Finally, let vs consider and consider againe, how glorious a case they shall be in, at the comming of our Lord Iesu Christ, that haue manfully shed their bloud for confessing of him. When one shall stand there, that was sawed a sunder, another that had his head cut off: one that was run in with a sword, another that was twitched vp in an halter; one that was stoned to death, another that was drowned in the water; one that was burned, another that was deuoured of wilde beasts; and another that was pined with hunger. These tortures and afflictions of body shall then appeare to be as so many Iewels and ornaments beautifying the Saints of God. What a ioyfull and comfortable meeting shall there be of Christ and these his witnesses? How honourably shall he welcome them? What crownes shall he decke them withall? What a goodly sight will this bee both to Angels and men? This dignitie *Iohn* expresseth in few words; These be the Saints, that haue shed their bloud for the testament of their God. Let vs therefore diligently bend our selues to the same end.

FINIS.